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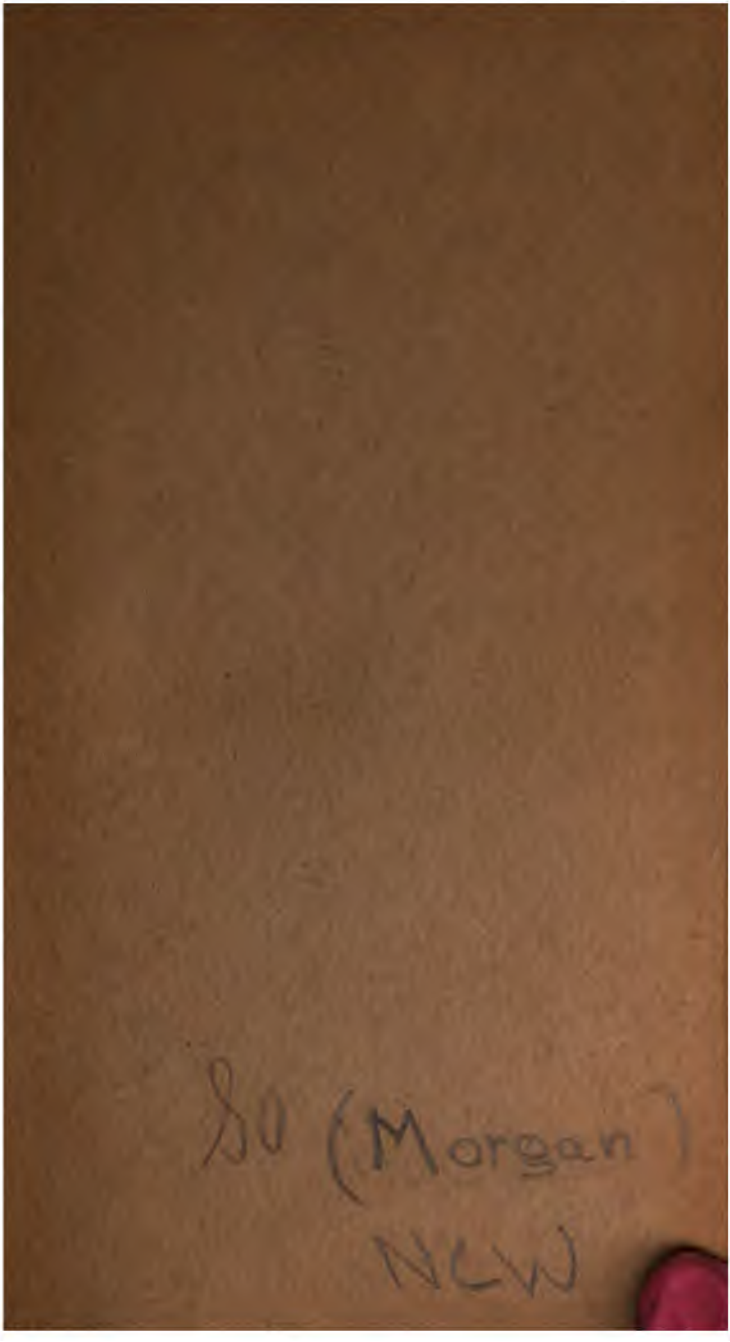
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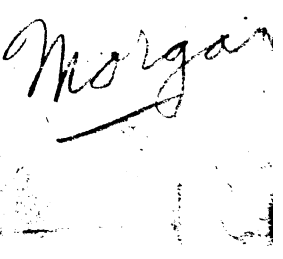

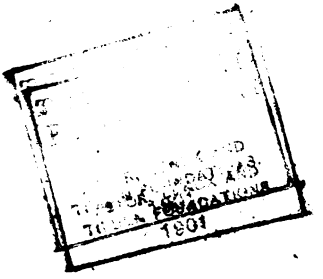
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1901

THE

NOVICE

OF

SAINT DOMINICK.

MISS OWENSON,

AUTHOR OF ST. CLAIR.

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VOL. III.

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THOMAS HUGHES, LUDGATE STREET.

T. Hamblin, Garlick Hill.

1823.

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THE

NOVICE

OF

SAINT DOMINICK.

MISS OWENSON,

AUTHOR OF ST. CLAIR.

For Truth and Good are one,
And Beauty dwells in them, and they in her,
With like participation.

Akenside.

Forse se tu gustasse anco una volta,
La millissima parte delle Geoje,
Che gusto un core amato riamando,
Aireste repentita Sospirando,
Perdutto e tutto il tempo,
Che, in amor non se spenda.

Tasso.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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vouchsafed her his protection in this the most trying conflict of her life. The indulgence of her soul's pious effusions always shed a balm over her wounded mind, calmed the perturbation of her thoughts, and renovated her drooping spirits. She arose full of that soothing consciousness, of having acted right, which almost repays, by the self-approbation it brings with it, the sacrifice it imposes. The baron had not left her more than a quarter of an hour, when the page delivered her the following

Billet.

'Let not the sight of this hand-writing awaken thy virtuous fears, O most amiable of women. I repeat it, thou canst have nothing to apprehend, since thou hast wrenched from my heart its last fond lingering hope. O Imogen! the *void!* the dreadful void! And for ever! God of heaven! for *ever!* But whither would

distraction lead me? It is now *all—all* over! This is merely to inform thee that thy father lives, is safe, and has sent the chevalier de Sorville hither to claim his child:—his *child!* Oh, that child! I have not yet seen my respected, my all-virtuous friend; he is in the royal tent, waiting till his majesty is at leisure to give him audience; thither I shall join him, and return with him to your tent; I will deliver you to him; to *him*, alone worthy of the sacred deposit! and he will bear thee from me for ever! In a few hours fancy only will whisper thy voice's soft murmur to my ears, and give thy form to my eye. Imogen, be our loves secret, as they were sacred: let not thy father triumph in the sufferings of my heart; from mine it shall be everlastingly concealed, that the novice of St. Dominick is the daughter of St. Dorval. No! the holy mystery of our pure and tender loves shall never escape the hearts it has ennobled! Farewell! most beloved, most venerated of all hu-

man beings: in a little time we shall part, perhaps, Father of mercy! to meet no more on this side heaven. But Faith has no surer empire than the heart of an unfortunate lover; for he, who loses the idol of his heart in this world, looks forward with a religious hope of possessing her in that which is to come. Here and hereafter eternally thine,

'DE MONTARGIS.'

The emotions which this billet awakened in Imogen's bosom, all-dissolving, all-distracting as they were, were yet considerably softened by the intelligence it contained; and, while her heart bled in agony over the sufferings of de Montargis, it throbbed with joy at the certainty of her father's safety, of her own restoration to his arms; while tears of sorrow and of pleasure dropped in fond alternation over the billet, which she covered with kisses and consigned to her bosom.

"Yes," said she passionately, "sacred

" be the mystery of our loves! never, oh!
" never shall it pass these lips, sealed in
" the holy silence of virtue; but with its
" object live for ever in my heart. Yes,
" de Montargis, I have resigned thee, but
" virtue exacts no more: and though it
" did it would not be obeyed; for, while
" this heart throbs with life, thou wilt be
" its first, its dearest, best beloved object."
Imogen then endeavoured to shake off the emotion which still agitated her frame; she bathed her face and eyes, arranged her dress, and continued to walk up and down the tent, gradually recovering strength of mind and body, and supporting her spirits by making her father, and her happy reunion to him, the sole object of her thoughts: while anxiety to appear not only composed, but to the greatest advantage, in the eyes of the noble and illustrious de Sorville, whose virtues and talents, as well as her singular connection with her first friend, the minor canoness of St. Dominick, excited the liveliest interest, revived

her usual wish to please, and shed a transient animation over her looks, her air, her countenance; a faint colour flushed on her pale cheek, a languid fire beamed in her pensive eyes, and the flutter of ardent expectation touched her every motion with *naïveté*.

Yet, when she heard the baron's voice in the outward apartment, her heart sank within her breast, though her spirits rallied as the curtain drew back, and de Montargis, leading in the most interesting figure in the world, faintly pronounced, "Mademoi-" "selle de St. Dorval"—"The chevalier de "Sorville." With nearly the same emotions as Imogen felt, when for the first time her father acknowledged himself as such, she sprung forward to receive de Sorville, who, as her only parent's better-self; as the lover of *Pasiphäe*, the friend of de Montargis; and as the unknown sympathizer in her sorrows amidst the aisles of St. Dominick; seemed to her as the centre of all those various interests,

feelings, and affections, her heart so profoundly cherished. The chevalier, with an air tenderly parental, but respectfully familiar, pressed her to his heart. "Forgive," said he, as he released her, "oh! "forgive, sweet lady, this freedom; it is "the impulse of a heart overflowing with "joyous emotions, to which it has long "been a stranger. Thou art the daughter "of St. Dorval, and his child is mine; I "shared and witnessed the sufferings thy "loss awakened. I share and witness the "joy thy recovery bestows. Look at her, "my lord, does she not resemble her mo-"ther? Such was Julia de Ribemont "when I first beheld you a rosy boy "sporting in her arms."

The baron, who, pale and spiritless, was leaning over a chair for support, in an attitude and with a look of the deepest despondency, faintly replied:

"I have a very slight recollection of "madame de St. Dorval, and cannot judge "of the resemblance."

"But my father," said Imogen eagerly, and pressing the chevalier's hand, as he seated himself by her, "speak to me only "of my father."

"His wounds are not dangerous," said the chevalier, "and he is fast recovering. "I was at the chateau de Rosemont when "his despatches reached me; merciful "heaven! how deeply did their contents "touch my heart!" Imogen perceived the violent emotion that agitated the chevalier's bosom as he spoke, and recollected the letter of the dying nun: the chevalier, after an affecting pause, continued: "A "tender melancholy tie then bound me to "de Rosemont; although my sister had "left it, yet I flew from my solitude to "the camp, and found thy father just re- "turned from an unsuccessful expedition, "by which a second time he lost his "child. The phrenzy of his mind in- "creased his bodily sufferings, and even "his senses were impaired. I procured "leave of absence from the duke de

"Mayenne for my suffering friend, and "removed him from the tumult and horror of the camp, where all was consternation and dismay from the late decisive "defeat. Having placed him under the "care of a skilful surgeon, and in a sweet "and peaceful retreat in the village of "Nivemont, I cheered his spirits with the "hope of your safety and restoration, and "set off instantly in search of you; with "how much success, this most happy interview evinces. The village of Nivemont is scarce ten leagues from hence; "I have a carriage and fresh horses waiting at the entrance of the tent, and this "evening I shall have the happiness of "placing you in your father's arms: for "the king has behaved with his usual "goodness and generosity, and has even "refused to accept your personal acknowledgments, 'lest,' as he gallantly says, "he should pay the ransom of *your* captivity with *his own*, and in his turn become your prisoner."

"Then," said Imogen faintly, yet struggling for firmness, "there is nothing "I suppose to prevent my instant depar- "ture."

"Nothing," said the chevalier, "to "prevent, but every thing to urge it."

The baron, casting a look of reproach, of agony, on Imogen, turned towards the chevalier, and endeavoured to enter into conversation. At that moment the servants appeared with refreshments; Imogen attempted to do the honours of the table, but her hands trembled, and the tears every moment rushed to her eyes.

The baron, unable to command the least presence of mind, remained silent and abstracted. The chevalier alone talked with ease and cheerfulness, and commended the repast, which he confessed a long fast rendered peculiarly grateful.

Imogen now, for the first time, gratified her eager curiosity, by gazing on the person of one who had so long, though unknown, awakened her veneration and re-

spect. The prevailing character of his figure and countenance was interest. It was impossible to behold him without emotion: his form, thin and slight almost to emaciation, rose not beyond the middle stature; his countenance wore the traces of affliction tempered by philosophy; of profound penetration softened by benevolence; as if that keen perception of mind, which penetrated through every fold of the human heart, discovered the vices, or detected the errors of mankind, was ever pursued by that benevolence which pitied while it condemned. His large full eyes, of dark grey, were searching in their pointed glances, but soft and interesting in their general expression; his brow, arched and knit, though never harshly drawn, wore a pensive contraction, the apparent effect of habitual melancholy: while the furrows of his finely-formed forehead seemed rather the traces of deep reflection than of years. His complexion was wan and pale, yet subject to transient glows; and

though the general character of his countenance and manner was gravity, yet both were occasionally illuminated with animation and fire. He was dressed in deep mourning, and appeared scarcely to have passed his fortieth year. Imogen, as she gazed on him, gradually recognised the original of that picture she had seen with the sister Pasiphäe; the lustre of the eye was indeed faded, the lip's light smile ceased to play, and youth's warm blushes no longer crimsoned the cheek; but the soul, which gave expression to the whole, still illumined every feature, and irradiated every look. His voice too was no stranger to her ear; it still possessed the same deep pathos of tone as when it first awakened her fears amidst the midnight horrors of St. Dominick.

From her ardent contemplation of this truly-striking, this admirable and interesting object, she was roused by a loud sigh which escaped the baron's lips. She started, but dared not encounter his eyes. The

chevalier arose, Imogen and the baron followed his example, and the chevalier desired the page to order his servants to draw up the carriage to the entrance of the tent: then, taking Imogen by the hand, said he was ready to attend her. A silence of a moment ensued, her hand trembling in his grasp, her heart sank, died, within her bosom.

The chevalier, without appearing to notice her emotion, loosed her hand, and advanced to the outward apartment, to give some orders to his attendants.

Then Imogen, faint, and almost wholly overcome, turned her eyes upon the baron; he approached her with a tottering step; the ashy paleness of death bleached his cheek; love, agony, and despair, mingled their expression in his countenance. "Imo-
"gen!" he faintly exclaimed, gazing ardently on her, "Imogen!" but he could pronounce her name only.

Imogen sank upon a chair, and wept bitterly.

The baron fell at her feet, seized her

trembling hands, and pressed them to his lips.

Imogen, in a perturbation that shook her frame almost to dissolution, arose: "Forbear," she faintly articulated, "O "de Montargis, in mercy!"

"Imogen," he wildly exclaimed, "you "cannot, dare not, refuse me this last sad "indulgence; yet a few short moments, "and I shall never behold thee more."

"Never!" replied Imogen shuddering, "never!"

At that moment some one entered the outward apartment. Imogen would have rushed by the baron, but his extended arms withheld her; he pressed her to his heart; the curtain moved; she burst from his embrace—the chevalier appeared; scarcely knowing what she did, she caught his arm, and faintly said, "*Now* I am ready."

He led her forward, and placed her in the vehicle; then returned to speak to the baron, but he was not to be found; he followed Imogen into the carriage, the blinds

were drawn to frustrate the intrusion of impertinent curiosity, and the carriage drove rapidly away. Imogen sank back, closed her eyes, and, unmindful of the chevalier's presence, gave a boundless scope to her emotions.

Unstifled sighs died upon her lips, unconscious tears swelled her eyes, and bathed her colourless cheeks. To the pang, the dreadful pang, of parting succeeded the soothing recollection of her late enjoyed happiness; that soft interchange of ideas, that *intelligent communion* of mind, that reciprocity of sentiment and opinion, the grateful homage paid not only to her person, but her virtues and her genius; and those tender ardent protestations of unalterable, of enthusiastic love, which even in memory shed a glow through her sinking heart, and animated her drooping spirit.

"Yes," thought she, "to be worthy of "the love of such a being, and to possess "it, is bliss supreme; thus blessed I must

" not, will not, complain. In proportion " as it is valuable, the sacrifice I have " made of it to virtue spreads a profound " self-created satisfaction through my " soul: for, O Virtue! even thy tears are " sweet!"

Then the idea of that long-suffering parent, for whose sake this immolation of her heart's present felicity had been made, shot across her mind: the joy of their re-union; the comfort her presence would convey to his wearied heart; the calm and gentle destiny that awaited her future days; the happiness she would derive in lengthening out her father's existence, by watchful care and tender solicitude; and the useful, improving, and tranquil, life she should lead in the bosom of her family, and in the society of her inestimable parent and his virtuous friend,—awakened a hope, that, from the wreck of her heart's first wishes, some fragments of felicity might be yet secured to enrich her future life. Already she beheld joy sparkling in the

eye of her father as he again pressed her to his bosom; already she beheld the rose of health shed its glow on his cheek, and her own flushed with the hope, and coloured with its orient hue the lingering tear which had not yet dried upon its polished surface; then, conscious of the presence of her silent associate, she raised her eyes, and observed his fixed in a penetrating glance upon her face.

Imogen, colouring and confused, attempted to apologize for her silence and stupidity.

"Nay," said the chevalier abruptly, "let me not stem the course of thy reflec-
"tions: thus, sweet child of nature, may
"they ever flow to the impulses of thy
"heart and fancy! Unsophisticated and
"unrestrained, long may thy animated and
"tender feelings indulge their sweet and
"glowing reveries! Long may the tear
"of grateful sensibility fill thine eye, the
"smile of joy play over thy lip, and the
"blush of hope and pleasure warm thy

" cheek! But the world and experience
" will struggle to bereave thee of these
" sweet and profound emotions; and when
" it gives a mechanical impulse to thy
" passions and thy feelings, then wilt thou
" pursue the shadows, and live upon the
" recollection of these dreams of the soul,
" which so seldom, oh! so very seldom,
" survive the blissful era of youth."

This speech, though so consonant to the enthusiastic temper of Imogen's mind, rather increased than lessened her confusion. She again attempted to apologize for her abstraction, and the chevalier again interrupted her.

" Have I not," said he, " an hereditary
" claim on your friendship? and yet will
" you deny me the privilege of a friend,
" that of dismissing all formality and ce-
" remonious observance of the cold forms
" of common-place etiquette, so destruc-
" tive too frequently of the most interest-
" ing movements of the heart and mind?
" Such I am sure were yours, my sweet
" companion."

"My heart was indeed full of pleasant "hopes and ardent expectation that my "presence would restore my father to "health and happiness," said Imogen, casting down her eyes.

"And the reflection that anteceded that "pleasant filial hope," said the chevalier, with a penetrating glance, "was tinged "with a grateful recollection of the deli- "cate and polite attentions of your late "noble and generous host; and with some "degree of *natural* regret at so soon re- "linquishing so valuable, so accomplished "a friend."

Imogen, with a cheek crimsoned with blushes, and eyes that expressed amazement at what at the moment appeared supernatural penetration, faintly replied, that the baron de Montargis had indeed '*taken captivity captive*,' and had behaved to her with a delicacy, a refinement, a noble and disinterested generosity, which, during her residence at the royal camp, had left no one uneasy sensation on her mind, but

what her fears and anxieties for her father awakened.

"Such a conduct," said the chevalier, "is perfectly consonant to the principles, "the sentiments, and character, of this illustrious young nobleman, than whom "France boasts not a nobler. From the "moment I heard you were taken prisoner, it was my anxious hope that you "had fallen into his hands; while, next "to the prayer your father offered up for "your safety, was one that you might escape the power of de Montargis."

"Yes," said Imogen sighing, "the "evening previous to our departure my "father taught me to avoid that fate as "the most dreadful that could befal me: "he bade me too, if possible, conceal my "name and rank; but the baron found me "in a situation that prohibited mystery."

"The baron," said the chevalier, "in "a conversation we had previous to my "introduction to you, related to me the "circumstances under which he found

"you. Good God! how touching, how "interesting was your situation, and in "what pathetic, what glowing colours "was it described! The baron seemed "to forget it was the daughter of the count "de St. Dorval who was the heroine of "his tale; and will not you, my sweet "friend, in relating to your father the ge- "nerosity, the kindness, and benevolence, "of your amiable conqueror, forget he "also is your enemy by inheritance?"

"Oh!" said *Imogen eagerly*, "suffer "me to depute *you* as the interpreter of "my sentiments and gratitude to my fa- "ther. Ungrateful I *cannot, will not* be, "even for a *parent*: and he would proba- "bly spare the encomium of his enemy "from the lips of his child. I am not yet "sufficiently established in his heart to "run the risk of losing my enviable hopes "of its possession by the gratification of "my own feelings."

"I understand you," said the chevalier pointedly; "I enter into the nature of

" those feelings; I am conscious that the
" source from whence they spring is pure
" and elevated. I am honoured by the
" task you have assigned me, and I trust I
" shall not prove myself deficient in its
" performance. The subject in question
" will probably never be discussed be-
" tween your father and yourself. He will
" certainly not be over-eager to recur to
" it; for, in this instance, the generosity
" of his nature will be counteracted by the
" force of prejudice and the influence of
" pride. He will feel, in all the sympathy
" of kindred heroism, the noble conduct of
" the younger *de Montargis*; but, stung
" by mortifications, from owing such a
" depth of kindness to an open and pro-
" fessed enemy, he will shrink from ad-
" verting to it, until an opportunity of re-
" turning it is afforded him. Oh! why
" dare not man be himself? Why is he
" ever the voluntary victim of passion and
" of prejudice? Why does he submit his
" happiness, and even his virtue, to the

" empire of hereditary error, when by one " bold effort of the soul he could burst his " disgraceful bondage, and restore him- " self to the divine influence of reason, " truth, and philosophy? Why, O noble " and excellent de St. Dorval! why da- " rest thou not stretch the hand of amity " and reconcilement to thy generous ene- " my, and press to thy bosom a heart " which throbs, in all the kindred sympa- " thy of virtue, to thy own?"

" Why, oh! why?" echoed the heart of Imogen, while her lips moved in silence; but the glance which met the chevalier's, the sigh which accompanied it, spoke, and was understood.

De Sorville pressed her hand tenderly; then, leaning back and closing his eyes, appeared to fall into a profound reverie; and Imogen again plunging into the train of reflection she had before indulged in, they continued their route in silence, interrupted only at intervals by a few casual observations on the scenery through which

they passed, until towards the decline of evening they reached the beautiful village of Nivemont.

Sequestered from the scene of warfare and tumult, reposing at the base of a stupendous mountain, whose summit was now illumined with the sun's last fading beam, its calm and peaceful appearance formed a striking contrast to the natural and moral disorder they had lately witnessed. To the unyielding and desolated fields succeeded a rich and smiling pasturage; to the furious and contending multitude who over-ran and despoiled them, groupes of industrious and cheerful peasantry; while the loud laugh of happy ignorance or infantine hilarity replaced the martial tone of the war-horn's shrill blast.

At the extremity of the village, and almost concealed by the deep umbrage of a mulberry-plantation, then rich in its snowy blossoms, lay the temporary residence of the wounded St. Dorval.

From the moment the chevalier pointed out its white chimneys and blue curling smoke to Imogen, her heart's palpitation increased until they reached its simple portal. She gave her trembling hand to de Sorville, who led her into a small but neat apartment, and then went to inform the count of her arrival. The intervening minutes were passed by Imogen in irrepressible emotion, and when the chevalier returned she was faint and spiritless.

"Your father," said he, "has borne "the news of your recovery better than, "from his weak state, could have been "expected; and he is now more agitated "by his impatience to see you, than he "could even be by your presence." He then led her to the apartment of her wounded parent; the curtain of his bed was drawn aside, and the crimson flush of the horizon, as it glowed on the casement, shed a faint tint over his emaciated form, which was supported by pillows, while his feeble arms were eagerly extended to re-

ceive the child who had risked her own life to preserve his. She sprang forward to fill them, and he fainted in her embrace, but soon recovered under the influence of his daughter's tender and solicitous cares. The affectionate pressure of her hand revived the flagging pulse of his; and her warm tears, as they bathed his cheek, recalled to its ashy surface the vital glow of fading existence. He opened his languid eyes, and fixed for a minute their ardent gaze on Imogen; then raising them meekly to heaven, offered up a silent prayer, and again embraced her for whose sake it was preferred. The chevalier gazed on the affecting scene through tears of sympathizing feeling; while the count, the first flush of his emotion subsided, looked with a delighted smile on his charming daughter, then directed a triumphant glance to his friend; and taking a hand of each, as they sat on either side his bed, he exclaimed, "This is to be blessed indeed!" At that moment the surgeon, who was present,

observing the scarlet tint that flushed his patient's cheek, and the feverish throb that fluttered his pulse, reminded him that he had not slept for near thirty hours, and that the cause of his wakeful anxiety being thus happily removed, he should endeavour to take that salutary repose on which his recovery so much depended. Imogen instantly caught the hint, and pleaded her own extreme fatigue as a secondary cause for her retiring.

The count, unwilling to lose sight of her, expressed not a desire to sleep, but an anxious wish to hear an account of those incidents which had befallen her during their separation.

Imogen coloured, and looked at the chevalier, who said, "My dear friend, it is "late; mademoiselle de St. Dorval is faint "and exhausted, and stands almost in as "much need of rest as yourself. I, how-"ever, am perfectly informed of every cir-"cumstance attendant on her late extra-"ordinary adventure, and you must ac-

" cept of my narration, until recovered
" health and spirits will enable her to give
" it a new interest, by becoming the rela-
" tor herself."

Apprehension for the health of his child subdued every other sensation in the bosom of the count. An elderly female, to whom the house belonged, was summoned to attend her; and St. Dorval, with a thousand tender intreaties that she would take care of herself, if she wished him to live, kissed her cheek, and suffered her to retire.

When Imogen had reached the little parlour which she had before occupied, she found a neat but simple supper already laid out by her active hostess, who, with unceasing loquacity, dwelt on the sufferings of monseigneur the count, his anxiety about mademoiselle his daughter, the excellence of her own cream cheese, the low state of the markets, the honour conferred on her humble dwelling by the residence of such illustrious guests, and the hatred, envy, and malice, it would excite in her

less fortunate neighbours; and Imogen was already deep in the domestic politics of the village, when the chevalier joined her. As soon as supper was served, the attendants and hostess were dismissed; and de Sorville informed Imogen, that the detail which he had briefly made the count had listened to in strong and evident emotion, but that he had made no comment on the conduct of the baron de Montargis, except that once, when the chevalier dwelt with peculiar energy on the refined generosity of this amiable young nobleman, the count exclaimed with vehemence:

"It is thus I would have acted, had the "fortune of war thrown *him* in my power. "But his father would not have under- "stood this refined mode of triumph; he "would have crushed to the earth my "lovely, my innocent sufferer, had she "fallen *his* victim."

"And will he not," said Imogen, "make "some acknowledgment to the generous "son of his inveterate enemy?"

"I dared not, in the present moment, "urge it," returned the chevalier: "the "count, I fear, thinks it would look like "seizing on the opportunity to effect a re- "concilement between the families, which "I believe he would never consent to, "much less appear to solicit."

Imogen's only replication was a profound sigh; and the chevalier, observing the heaviness of her eyes, the paleness of her cheek, and the depression of her spirits, insisted on her retiring to rest, and conducted her himself to the door of the apartment prepared for her.

Once more alone and unobserved, her heart fondly and impulsively reverted to its long-treasured object of cogitation. As she divested herself of her attire, the picture of the baron de Montargis fell from her bosom, where she had deposited it with the billet which had enwrapt it. Had she, in that moment of emotion, retained any presence of mind to form a determination, it would have been to return this

precious shadow to the original; but the succeeding conflicts she had endured dissipated every idea unconnected with themselves, and the fond weakness of her enamoured heart now triumphed in the inadvertency of her mind. "Yes," said she, gazing tenderly on the almost-living resemblance, "it is not yet a crime to re-
"tain thee, though it is a weakness; it
"is not yet a crime to recall that moment
"when the glance of those eloquent eyes
"first met mine; when those lips first
"emitted the accents of a voice whose
"melting tone sunk to my heart; but
"when this fond indulgence shall cease
"to receive the sanction of virtue, as it
"now does of prudence, then, O precious
"image! thou shalt receive my last adieu."

Imogen pressed the picture to her lips, and placing it in the last incoherent letter she had received from the baron de Montargis, she deposited for the night the precious packet beneath her pillow, which, though not strewn with roses, was yet not

scattered with thorns; while the repose which exhausted nature bestowed was illumined by those glowing images the dream of fancy stole from the fond wishes of the heart, and sweetened by that proud self-approbation which conscious virtue ever bestows.

CHAP. XX.

Though the poisonous charms
Of baleful Superstition guide the feet
Of servile numbers thro' a dreary way,
a gentler star
Your lovely search illumines.
Proceed exulting to th' eternal shrine,
Where TRUTH conspicuous with her sisters twain,
The undivided partners of her sway,
With Good and Beauty reigns.

AKENSIDE.

THE dawn had scarcely glanced through the casement of Imogen's apartment, when she arose and dressed herself, then hurried to her father's room. All there was profound stillness, the count still

asleep, and his two attendants, each in their chair, gave audible intimation of the profound repose they enjoyed. The close-drawn curtains faintly admitted the dawn's strengthening light; a lamp still burnt on the table. Imogen, delighted to observe and cautious of disturbing her father's soft and salutary slumber, crept with noiseless step to his bed, and, kneeling beside it, offered up with her morning orisons a prayer for the recovery of her parent's health. Thus devoutly occupied, a light footstep caught her attention; it was the chevalier de Sorville, who stopped abruptly and gazed earnestly on her. Imogen with a smile put her finger on her lip to impose silence. The chevalier walked gently to the other side of the bed, and seated himself in a large antique arm-chair. Imogen, without rising from her recumbent posture, reposed her head on the counterpane, and fixed her affectionate looks on the pale and interesting countenance of her father, which was overspread with a placid

benignity that gradually animated into an expression of joy, and he faintly pronounced the name of Imogen.

"I am here, dearest father," she replied.

The count started, gazed earnestly at her, then at the chevalier, and with a smile, extending a hand to either, he exclaimed: "Then it was no dream. My "beloved child, my dear friend, I behold, "I embrace you both; and the blissful "vision of my sleep is not for once suc- "ceeded by the waking consciousness of "my misery. Oh! I have often dreamed "thus, but never thus awakened."

The count alternately embraced his daughter and his friend, and their anxious enquiries returned the grateful assurance that his mind was becoming the physician of his body, and that another such night of uninterrupted repose would add twenty years to his life. During the rest of the day Imogen scarcely lest her father's bedside for a moment, assisted at the dressing of his wounds, presented every thing he

tasted with her own hands, was silent when the physician commanded silence, and amusingly conversant when she observed her father listened with delighted attention without exhausting himself by participating in the conversation; and, as she hovered round him with endearing attention, she appeared like the rosy semblance of Health shedding her renovating influence over the pillow of sickness and affliction.

Dame Marguerette, their hostess, was commissioned to furnish Imogen with the best wardrobe that could be procured for the present; and in the evening she returned with some fine linen and a few simple but elegant dresses, purchased at a neighbouring town. The following day Imogen, as she sat by her father's bedside, amused herself with altering and adapting these dresses to her own sylph-like form; while the chevalier wrote letters at the other end of the room, and the count, more composed than he had been the preceding day, in calm delight contemplated

these objects so dear to his heart. Under the potent spell of his long-lost child's endearing attentions his health and strength perceptibly returned ; and his wounds, no longer irritated by the fever which the agitations of his mind and spirits communicated to his whole frame, healed so fast, that in a few days the surgeon's residence beneath the same roof became unnecessary, and his attendance was reduced to a daily visit. At the expiration of a week he was enabled to leave his bed ; and as he reclined on a couch, and inhaled the fresh air which an open casement admitted, Imogen, still hovering round him, administered to his mind and gaiety an exhaustless cordial, in the variety and charms of her conversation and the gaiety and infantine playfulness of her manner, becoming hourly more attached to the amiable author of her being, more profoundly alive to the sense of that duty which bound her to him, than if she had been always habituated to the strongest tie which nature twines round the human

heart. During her daily attendance on her father she suffered no truant thought to lure her attention from the track filial piety had marked out; and if, when alone and unobserved, she cast from her casement *one* tender longing glance towards the plains of Laon; if her soft sigh mingled with the midnight breeeze, and her warm tears fell amidst the midnight dews; yet with the returning morning the sensations of the mistress gave way to the feelings of the child, and the smile of filial affection chased the pensive gloom of mourning love. With all that native strength of mind by which she was so eminently distinguished, with all that natural ingenuous candour which so obviously characterised her unsophisticated manner, she still retained much of the bashful shyness of the recluse, the natural result of that cloistral privacy in which she was brought up, and which intimacy and habit alone could vanquish, except when some striking incident or circumstance revealed the native splen-

dor of her mind; then, and then only, her timidity, her reserve, and diffidence, disappeared, and *genius* and *reason* asserted their divine rights To the chevalier de Sorville she continued almost as much a stranger as she was the first day of their acquaintance. That melancholy abstraction which she attributed to the recent death of his unfortunate mistress, whom, notwithstanding his knowledge of her intimacy with Pasiphaë, he had not yet mentioned to her; his silent and reserved manners, with the eminent superiority his elevated and acknowledged virtues conferred on him; impressed her with awe, and inspired reverential esteem rather than that familiar affection so consonant to the tenderness of her heart. More attracted by the *splendid* than the *solid* virtues, because experience had not taught her to appreciate the full value of the latter, while the former were reflected through the dazzling medium of imagination, she expected to find in the chevalier de Sorville all those

fascinating graces, those heroic sentiments, and those sanguine and impetuous feelings, which, through the influence of sympathy, had captivated her in the character of the baron de Montargis: but disappointment hung upon the hope; and virtue, divested of enthusiasm and the graces, appeared under a less-attractive aspect than she had hitherto contemplated it. A novice even in laudable simulation, she could not conceal the reserve and awe with which the chevalier's presence struck her. If he abruptly entered the room while with her animated prattle she chased the spirit of languor from her father's couch, her gaiety disappeared, though not her cheerfulness; or if, while the chevalier read or wrote in one part of the count's room while in the other she frolicked round her father with the airy spirit of a sylphiad, she caught his eye averted from his book or his pen, and earnestly fixed on her, she blushed, and, construing his glance into a tacit reprehension of her childishness, suddenly became sedate and still.

Thus situated a fortnight had elapsed, and the count's descent to the parlour formed a little epocha of felicity to his family, when a courier arrived from Paris with several packets. Those addressed to the count were merely on business from his agent and steward. The chevalier, whose correspondence was extensive and interesting, retired to read his alone. When he returned, the count asked him if his letters brought any news?

"Yes," he replied; "something in the "political way, not uninteresting: but an "invalid should have nothing to do with "politics; besides, we have tacitly agreed "to avoid their discussion."

"Do thou then, my dear chevalier, "think me so very near the other world "as to be totally indifferent to what is "passing in this?" with a faint smile, yet with some degree of petulance, asked the count.

"I am at least sufficiently anxious to "*keep you in this*," said the chevalier af-

fectionately, " not to agitate your mind, " and consequently retard your recovery, " by——"

" I suppose Laon is taken," interrupted the count with the peevish impatience of an invalid.

" That you must have expected," said the chevalier: " a miracle only could have " saved it after the defeat of the convoy."

The chevalier then, taking up a letter, read the following passage:

" The victorious king has returned to Paris to treat of a peace with the Duke de Lorraine; and the duke de Mayenne, seeing his nephew de Guise and the chiefs of the League disposed to an accommodation, it is currently reported, will also make submission to his majesty. The young duke de Guise has solicited the king through the medium of his mother and his beautiful sister Louisa. The insinuating duchess exerts all the graces of persuasion in the interesting negociation; and her native eloquence, animated by those warm effu-

sions of heart the cause inspires, pleads with irresistible force for her rebel son. The other day, as she stood conversing at a window in the Louvre with his majesty on the subject nearest her soul, he exclaimed with his usual energy, *Cousin, what is it you demand? I can refuse you nothing.* The young duke has consequently obtained permission to throw himself at the king's feet; who, with his usual generosity, substituted caresses for reproach, and honours him with the title of NEPHEW. Not only the duke, but all of the penitent nobles who have submitted, experience this generous treatment, are admitted to his most select parties of pleasure, and received even in his most private societies with that boundless confidence which experienced attachment and fidelity are supposed only to inspire. What a lesson to the few who still obstinately adhere to the standard of unavailing opposition!"

"Say rather," interrupted the count,

"what a lure to seduce patriotism and "principle from the standard of indepen- "dence and honour, to bow at the shrine "of servility and interest."

"Patriotism!" repeated the chevalier with more than usual energy: "Oh! for "ever sacred be that principle, which in- "cludes the existence of every social, "every public virtue; which, like the sun's "genial glow, diffuses its influence with "indiscriminate benefit! He who nou- "rishes within his soul the pure, the in- "violable spark of patriotism; who is de- "voted with all the energies of his intel- "lectual and corporeal being to support "the liberty, the independence, the moral "good, and political safety of his coun- "try; who opposes his individual exertions "to the arm of oppression, to the threat "of invasion, to the power of tyranny, "whether foreign or domestic; who on "the altar of the public weal offers up the "sacrifice of his private views and in- "terest; who looks on the land which

" gave him birth as his parent, and on her " children as his brethren; who holds to " the mirror of recollection the past splen- " dor and dauntless virtues of her ancient " state, and opposes the glorious reflec- " tion to the feeble efforts of modern de- " generacy; and who disseminates around " him those principles which he so pro- " foundly feels; let *his* name be enrolled " on the annals of immortality above " that of the greatest conquerors of the " earth, and let succeeding generations " do homage to his memory, and emulate " as they reverence his virtues: but ne- " ver, O never, let the glorious name of " patriotism be wrested to the purposes " of narrow-souled faction or party pre- " judice."

" Faction!" repeated the count warmly; " you do not call the League a faction, " which had for its object the protection " of the state against tyranny, and the de- " fence of religion against schism?"

" That was the pretence of the confe-

" deration formed by the house of Lor-
" raine, my dear count, not the motive;
" for how few of the multifarious crowd
" who clung to their standard were ac-
" tuated by the pure love of their coun-
" try, or the mild and beneficent spirit of
" true religion? No: if we closely in-
" vestigate the conduct and principles of
" these nominal patriots, we shall find
" them influenced by motives of private
" pique and personal resentment, by rest-
" less ambition or desperate fortune;
" breathing the factious spirit of party,
" not the universal spirit of public good,
" and filled with that persecuting sectarian
" zeal which unites the energy of enthu-
" siasm to the self-supposed infallibility of
" ignorance, and superstition sanctions the
" horrors of fanaticism with the sacred
" name of religion. Such were, I believe,
" the motives and principles which influ-
" enced the aggregate of the Leaguers;
" and even many, too many, members of
" the opposite and royal party were not

" free from the influence of prejudice,
" bigotry, and intolerance. Yet still there
" were many also who followed the for-
" tunes of the duke de Guise from pure
" but mistaken principles of right, of
" which you, my lord, and many other
" virtuous and illustrious characters, are
" a proof: but the conviction of this error
" has been followed by its recantation,
" and——"

" And the conviction of my error, my
" dear chevalier, shall also be followed by
" its recantation; but it is from conviction
" only I shall submit. Let those who
" can meanly from interested views crouch
" at the feet of this royal political con-
" vert, whose faith knows no standard but
" his interest. I have only attached my-
" self to a party whose object was to anni-
" hilate tyranny; I have only fought in a
" cause for which in ages back my ances-
" tors bled in the fields of Palestine. Would
" you have me supplicate the royal pardon
" for that, and introduce a new system of

" political principles and religious faith
" into my family, merely because apostacy
" was the fashion of the day?"

" My dear count, we too often take up
" our religious and political opinions by
" inheritance, and defend them as we
" should our estates, merely because they
" descend to us from our forefathers: but
" to cherish a prejudice because it is an-
" tiquated, or was the governing principle
" of our ancestors, must lead to everlast-
" ing error, and stop the progressive in-
" fluence of all that tends to wisdom,
" knowledge, or happiness. Do you re-
" collect, my dear friend, when we studied
" together at Leyden, with the old Dutch
" philosopher, what devotees we were to
" the substantial forms of Aristotle and
" the solid spheres of Ptolemy, as our
" fathers were before us? Shortly after
" we went to England, conversed with Ba-
" con, read his manuscript tracts, em-
" braced the new light effused from the
" mind of the wondrous Englishman, and

"smiled at the obstinate errors of our "sires?"

"Are we then, chevalier, to draw in- "ferences from the lesser concernments of "science to regulate the more important "duties of life? In politics and religion, "shall not the experience of our ancestors "and the sanction of ages at least direct "us?"

"They should serve as beacons, my "friend, not as guides. Let us profit by "their errors, not embrace them merely "because they were *theirs*. God has en- "dued each of his creatures with a suf- "ficient portion of reason to guide him "through this life to life eternal. He "has endowed him with a moral agency "to judge for himself: if he act up to "the best of that judgment he stands no "further accountable. But how few are "they who see with their own eyes, and "hear with their own ears; who take "the trouble to investigate the moral "principles by which they are governed

"in this life, or the faith by which they "are to be saved in that to come?— "No:* to stifle the impulse of reason, to "walk on in the beaten path marked out "by his predecessors, to think and believe "as those who preceded him thought and "believed, such is the lot of man, rich "in his own imperishable treasures, yet "too indolent to explore the mine from "whence they sprang. The scanty pro- "portion of reflection and belief which he "possesses is borrowed from the frugal "store of others; and should one awaken- "ing effort of reason, one beam of na- "ture's light, rouse his slumbering intel- "lectual energy, or flash conviction on "his mind, timidly clinging to the bosom "of prejudice, he shrinks in cowardly fear "from the divine impulse, and, infatuated "with error flies from the influence of "truth. Oh! were it not so, would reli- "gion, the intended source of all happi- "ness, become the inexhaustible spring "of human misery? Were not the use-

" less forms and unmeaning ceremonies
" with which the folly of man has clothed
" it of much greater consideration to man-
" kind than its *essence*, would it become
" the source of every species of persecu-
" tion? In the variety of sects into which
" the Christian world is portioned, has one
" principle of morality or religon been
" the cause of their division? Do they
" not all agree in the belief of a God that
" loves virtue; and that which he loves
" must be best? Then why does fanaticism
" plunge the sword into the bosom of the
" opposing sectarian, but to support the
" infallibility of some speculative point,
" some idle form, unconnected with reli-
" gion, if not foreign to its interest? Why
" does the Christian endeavour to persecute
" his brother Christian into a belief of some
" tenet which he himself confesses he does
" not comprehend, and which, were it
" immutably true would need no such
" coercive enforcement? O my lord,
" had your brave and *illustrious* ancestors

"dared to have thought for themselves,
"they would not have united themselves
"to that assassinating band, who, under
"the sanction of religion, spread horror
"and desolation through the finest coun-
"tries of Europe and Asia; a lawless ban-
"ditti, who raised the standard of murder
"and oppression under the command of
"barbarity and fanaticism. And pardon
"me, count, if I say, dared you but think
"for yourself, you would condemn their
"errors and avoid them. O my dear
"friend! behold that innocent being,"
pointing to Imogen; "the light of heaven
"still, I trust, lives in her bosom, un-
"clouded by prejudice or error; her heart
"glows with affection for her species, and
"her mind has not yet imbibed the into-
"lerant principle of persecuting all who
"believe otherwise than she has been
"taught to believe: and would you, by
"the influence of your own example, ren-
"der her the inheritress of her forefathers'
"illiberal prejudices? Oh, no! rather

"teach her, that true virtue and true reli-
"gion are confined to no sect, to no party,
"to no country, and to no age; that, like
"the dew of heaven, their influence is
"universal and impartial, and when un-
"opposed by prejudices, their vital prin-
"ciples are to be equally found in the heart
"of the Catholic and the Protestant, the
"Jew and the Mussulman, the Christian
"divine and the Indian bramin. But I
"have insensibly wandered from the point
"of discussion. Here," again taking up the letter, "here is a list of the most emi-
"nent of the Leaguers, who have made
"their formal submission to his majesty.
"My dear friend, dare I hope that you
"will add your name to those of the illus-
"trious converts?"

The count de St. Dorval arose in great emotion. "Chevalier," he exclaimed, "I
"reverence your noble and philanthropic
"sentiments, I adore your virtues, and I
"esteem your friendship beyond every
"other possession of life, save the affec-

"tion of this child; but we must drop
"for ever the discussion of a subject on
"which (however strong our sympathy on
"every other) we can never agree. I am
"too old and too indifferent to the opi-
"nion of the world to change those senti-
"ments almost interwoven with my exist-
"ence. I have no ambition to satisfy, and
"therefore no inducement to stoop to si-
"mulation. Your friendship and my
"child's affection are now the sole objects
"for which I shall live. Short, indeed,
"may be the term; let me enjoy it in
"peace."

Then, taking the offered arm of Imogen, he slowly crept to his own room, and, throwing himself on the couch, expressed a wish to sleep, and desired Imogen to leave him. Those sentiments (sentiments so congenial to her own) which the chevalier had uttered with an energy that gave them a superadded force, discovered to Imogen the strong sympathy which existed between herself and the

amiable de Sorville. Flattered by the coincidence, touched by the tender anxiety with which his friendship endeavoured to promote her father's interest, and actuated by that secret ambition of eminence which never slumbered in her mind, and which induced her to rescue her character from that infantine simplicity the chevalier appeared to attach to it, while her feelings and sentiments were still glowing with the ardor illumined by his, she hurried back to the parlour, and, for the first time divested of that timidity the chevalier's presence inspired, advanced towards him, and, placing both her hands in his, with peculiar grace and energy she said: "Suffer *my* heart to offer you its grateful "thanks for the active benevolence with "which you have exerted yourself in fa-"vour of its dearest object; while the ho-"nour you have conferred on me by sup-"posing I possess a mind capable of nou-"rishing those divine sentiments by which, "from your lips, I have been so pro-

"foundly edified, shall act as an incessant "stimulus to render myself worthy of your "esteem. Yes, sir; though nurtured in "the bosom of superstition, though early "associated with the votarists of party, "their example has produced an effect "diametrically opposite to their tenets. "I took nature and reason as my guide, "and by their aid I recovered those just "simple truths, which form the only basis "of our religious and moral life, but "which the dazzling allurements of error "and superstition had nearly lost to me "for ever."

The chevalier gazed for a moment on Imogen with delighted amazement: then, pressing the hands he still held to his lips, he exclaimed: "Wondrous being! who "unitest the gay simplicity of childhood "to the profound reflection of wisdom "and maturity. Go on in the glorious "path thou hast entered; it will finally "lead thee to consummate excellence in "this life, and to bliss eternal in that

" which is to come. Disseminate what
" you feel, and exert thy influence with
" thy father in the cause of toleration and
" philanthropy. Thy infatuating eloquence
" may prevail where the home-spun argu-
" ments of friendship have failed. O my
" sweet friend!" he continued, drawing a chair towards Imogen, and seating himself by her, " when bigotry either in poli-
" tics or religion invests the bosom of vice
" or ignorance, we scarcely feel a regret
" at their dreadful effects, and we are sa-
" tisfied that the crime becomes the pu-
" nishment of the aggressors; but when
" we see it tearing the hearts, inflaming
" the passions, and destroying the peace,
" of the great, the good, the virtuous, then
" our hearts weep blood, and we sigh over
" the frailty of human nature even in its
" most perfect state. Alas! how strongly
" is this illustrated in the noble families of
" St. Dorval and de Montargis! and par-
" ticularly in the characters of your father
" and the *younger* de Montargis, the one

" a *protestant*, the other a *catholic*; both " attached to different parties, both se- " vered by hereditary hatred, both con- " stantly opposed on the lists of variance " and dissension, yet both equally pos- " sessing every virtue that can adorn and " exalt human nature; brave, wise, gene- " rous, liberal, and humane; with minds " enlightened, intelligent, and philanthro- " pic; with hearts warm, benevolent, and " sensible; with tempers and dispositions " harmonized in unison with every social " joy; secretly united by sympathy, pub- " licly divided by prejudice. O my amia- " ble friend! did you but know the full " worth of these two inestimable charac- " ters, you would, like me, lament the fa- " tal prejudices which divide them."

Imogen, almost breathless with emotion, averted her head to conceal its effects.

" What de Montargis now *is* your fa- " ther once *was*," continued the che- valier: " the same youthful ardor, the " same enthusiasm, the same glowing vir-

"tues, and the same attractive graces, "were St. Dorval's. Nor was his con- "temporary and personal enemy (the el- "der de Montargis) destitute of virtues: "but your father injured him in a tender "point, and disappointed love has breath- "ed a deathless spirit over hereditary dis- "cord." Then, after a pause, the chevalier raised his eyes to Imogen's face, and added: "The letter I have received was "from your amiable *conqueror of Laon.* "He writes as though he were born for "no other purpose; the *eloquence* of *sen- "timent* is peculiarly his. But perhaps "you would wish to judge for yourself," presenting her the letter.

Imogen, trembling and agitated, while her colour changed successively from white to red, impatiently took the letter, not knowing what she did.

"Keep it, and read it at your leisure," said the chevalier carelessly.

"No," returned Imogen, after the struggle of a moment, returning the letter,

"I have no wish, no curiosity. But he is "well, I hope?"

"He makes no mention of his health," said the chevalier, "nor has he had the "gallantry to make any inquiry for his "fair captive. However, you will forgive "this omission when I tell you he seems "anxiously interested for your father's re-"covery."

"Oh!" said Imogen, recovering herself, "he does me the justice to believe "that *my* health and happiness are wrapt "up in my father's, and that to inquire "for either is to enquire for both. Where "is the baron now, sir?"

"At Paris."

"Is he," inarticulately demanded Imogen after a long pause, "is he yet mar-"ried?"

"Then he informed you of his matri-"monial engagements?" asked the chevalier in some surprise.

"Yes," faintly replied Imogen, shocked at the imprudence she had been hurried into.

"No, he is not yet married, but it is "probable he soon will. The nature of his "connection with mademoiselle de V—— "is all a romance. She fell in love with "his picture accidently seen, and his "character accidentally learnt. She deli- "vered him from prison; and with more "candour than prudence, or perhaps than "delicacy, blazoned the excess of her "romantic passion every where, and soon "made her tenderness the topic of fashion- "able discussion, and the subject of satiri- "cal wit. The king himself at last took "an interest in it, and proposed a match "to the two fathers, who mutually con- "sented to the union of their children; "and it is natural to suppose, that, if the "young baron did not return the love of "his mistress with equal enthusiasm, a "heart so generous, so sensible, as his "was deeply touched with the faithful af- "fection and ardent tenderness of a young "and lovely woman, who had not the art "to conceal the love he had unconsciously "inspired."

"*Is* she lovely?" demanded Imogen, eagerly.

"The world thinks her so: and having "been brought up without restraint and in "great retirement, she has much youthful "vivacity and *naïveté* in her character."

Imogen dared not ask more. She arose with affected composure, and, collecting some flowers she had lately gathered in a basket, said she would go and arrange them in her father's room, and left the parlour; while the chevalier, pursuing her with his penetrating glance, did not attempt to detain her. From the period in which this conversation took place, the intercourse between Imogen and the chevalier de Sorville wore a new aspect; her insinuating familiarity and tender confidence increasing in proportion as his habitual gravity and reserve wore away, and his naturally mild and gentle character unfolded its amiable but unobtrusive qualities; delighted to observe that his presence no longer imposed restraint or awakened

shyness. When they were alone, he indulged his melancholy by speaking of his departed friend, his unfortunate mistress; and by dwelling on that awful touching moment when, in all the sympathy of friendship, they first met in the cloisters of St. Dominick. In the presence of the count, their conversation was of a less touching and more general nature; and he endeavoured to steal forth with kind artifices those native powers of Imogen's strong and cultivated mind, which modesty and habitual bashfulness concealed. Sometimes, by affected ignorance or well-feigned curiosity, by supporting an erroneous argument or starting a false hypothesis, he drew forth those shining talents, that clear comprehensive faculty of reflection, which traces error to its source by the light of simple unsophisticated reason; and sometimes, by falling into the discussion of a refined and touching sentiment, awakened that tender, persuasive, energetic, eloquence which flows from the sensible

heart, the refined and elegant taste; but if the chevalier frequently shrouded with one hand his own intellectual treasures, while with the other he drew aside the veil which modesty flung over genius, yet sometimes he burst upon his lively companion in all the radiance of native ability, refined and exalted by the most extensive and universal information, by the most intimate knowledge of all most precious in art or science, and crowned with a thorough and practical acquaintance with men and manners. Imogen, lost in delighted amazement, felt an hourly increase of admiration and esteem for her new friend; while the count de St. Dorval, at once gratifying the pride of a father and a friend, and indulging the indolence of an invalid, rather listened to than participated in their conversation; and, while in the parental vanity of his heart he triumphed in the genius and talents of his daughter, he beheld with secret delight the increasing affection and esteem of two ob-

jects so deservedly dear to him, and who, in the pursuit of virtue, truth, and knowledge, so strongly recommended each other.

As soon as the count was able to write, he dispatched a courier to the abbess of St. Dominick, with a packet inclosing a large sum, to be laid out in any manner the abbess should direct for the benefit of the convent, as an acknowledgement for the care taken of his daughter in her infant years, and accompanied by a letter of thanks, including a particular request that the holy mother would give every information respecting the date of the year and month, together with every circumstance attending the reception of his daughter at the convent of St. Dominick. The count wrote also a letter of thanks to the lady Magdelaine, accompanied by another from his daughter; and Imogen, whose affectionate heart overflowed with tenderness for all with whom she had been associated in early life, and whose liberal

and generous nature eagerly sought opportunity of making participators in her good fortune, sent a sum of money to Ambrose, the old maitre-d'hotel, to be divided among the domestics of the chateau; a letter full of grateful acknowledgements, and enclosing a munificent present to the page, a diamond cross to the lady abbess, with some less valuable but tastefully-chosen gifts for the nuns, to many of whom she was warmly attached. In three days the courier returned, bringing back with him the packets directed for the chateau de Montmorell, it being then only occupied by a peasant and his wife, who took care of it; from whom he learnt that, the civil wars having been carried almost to its portals, it had been twice attacked by either party, and the lady Magdelaine and her family had been at last obliged to abandon it: and that she was then in Holland with her father-director, publishing her works. From the abbess they received a formal letter of congratulation, with an

appropriate exordium on the danger of prosperity and the lying vanities of life. She inclosed the date of Imogen's reception at the convent, which exactly corresponded with the time in which the count lost his daughter; but she had nothing further to relate than what Imogen herself was already acquainted with; and from the sisterhood Imogen received a number of little billets of felicitation, gratitude, and esteem, accompanied by such little gifts of remembrance as their taste and ingenuity enabled them to make.

CHAP. XXI.

Rich was his mind in ev'ry art divine;
And thro' the paths of science had he walk'd,
The votary of wisdom.

GLOVER'S *Leonidas.*

Sa nature libre et pardie
Irreguliers dans ses attraits,
S'accord avec ma fantaisie.

VOLTAIRE.

THE wounds of the count de St. Dorval no longer required surgical attendance, but his long-undermined and delicate constitution had received a shock that almost baffled medical skill. Though weak, nervous, and debilitated, his rest and appetite gone, his form reduced to an anatomy, his spirit still seemed to survive the wreck of his frame, and his mind to triumph over corporeal infirmity. He now began to express an impatience to set out for the chateau de St. Dorval, as he believed himself able to travel by easy stages; but his physician having hinted that the mild and

general air of Italy might be more efficacious than that of France, he testified the liveliest emotion of pleasure at the opinion, declared that it was in Italy alone he had ever truly lived, and that he then found himself perfectly able to undertake the journey, as even the hope of once more visiting that beloved country gave a healthful throb to his languid pulse. When he talked the matter over with Imogen and the chevalier, the latter said that the air of Calabria was in high estimation for its purity and mildness, and that he had a friend who possessed a house there which he could command.

"Do you then," said the count with a melancholy smile, "shrink from per-
"forming the rites of hospitality? I thought
"you would have offered your friend a
"corner in that sweet retreat that once
"was to him the temple of love and bliss,
"the sweetest spot that nature ever adorn-
"ed since she imparadised the first created
"pair in Eden."

"My dear friend," said the chevalier, in a toneful of tender remonstrance, "you "know my heart; there you live a never-"absent guest; and it is for your sake, "for your's only, that I do not press an "invitation which——"

"I understand you, chevalier," interrupted the count: "you tremble for the "weakness of your friend. Alas! well "may you tremble; for often, too often, "have you experienced its effects; but if "there be a luxury in woe, suffer me to "taste the former, who have so long felt "the latter only: suffer me once more "to visit a spot where lived and where "expired all my joys, where every object "will bring remembrance to my soul, and "cheer my drooping heart with memory's "lovely visions, where alone I enjoyed "life, where alone I shall meet death with "composure."

"Oh talk not of death, my father!" exclaimed Imogen tenderly, and falling on her father's neck; "long, long shall you

" live to bless your child, and comfort her " for the loss of every other tie. I have " but you, but you in the whole world!" she added in an affecting tone, and bathing the cheek she kissed with her tears. The count pressed her in silent but profound emotion to his heart; while the chevalier, deeply affected, encircled them both with his arms, and with affectionate energy exclaimed: " Long, long may you both " live, a blessing and a comfort to each " other!"

After a few intellectual struggles with the intentions of the count, Imogen and de Sorville desisted from their endeavours, convinced that opposition irritated without dissuading; and the day being fixed for their departure for Italy, the chevalier set out for the chateau de Rosemont, to take leave of his sister, and to induce her to follow him to Tuscany, when an illustrious English family, then on a visit with her, should return to their native country. The chevalier was three days absent, and on

the morning of their departure arrived. An *avant-courier* preceded them by a day to prepare accommodation on the road. Imogen accompanied her father in a traveling carriage, the chevalier rode, and four domestics followed on horseback. The route they had planned out was, to proceed by a direct road to Lyons, there to embark on the Rhone, and coast along its delightful shores to Marseilles, where they meant to hire a felucca, and embark on the Genoese gulph for Tuscany. The mind of Imogen had long owed a homage to Italy, and her ardent fancy would have reveled in the anticipated delights of a journey so pregnant with interest, or a residence in a country which held so conspicuous a place in the history of the world, and where art and science (after a long bondage imposed by Gothic ignorance and Gothic barbarity) again revived their drooping heads, had not the feelings of her heart opposed themselves to the propensities of her taste; for France still con-

tained that heart's dearest object; and still enamoured though hopeless, faithful though desponding, her affection for the baron de Montargis was an ever-existing principle of the soul, whose vital power was unextinguished, even when its active influence suffered a temporary suspension; and to breathe the same air which he inhaled, to live in the same country which was *his* residence, was a tender and melancholy indulgence she could not resign without the most refined and profound regret. Hope in love, however opposed by certainty, never expires but with the passion itself. A thousand times Imogen said: "Of what importance to me is the "distance which shall divide us? Though "seas shall roll between us and moun-"tains intervene, shall I not be as near "him as now that we inhabit the same "country? It is fate, not distance, that "divides us for ever!" Yet still some lingering and undefined expectation fluttered at her heart, and fondly warded off the intrusion of despair.

Their journey to Lyons was performed by the count with more strength and spirit than was expected. The susceptible spirits of Imogen, exhilarated by air and exercise, by a variety of scenes and objects that met her delighted glance, gradually regained their lively tone: and her mind, raised by novelty or interested through the medium of her taste, poured forth its sensations in the eloquent language of nature. Every village was an object of interest that awakened a thousand *naïf* observations, every picturesque view or romantic scene an object of admiration which raised the dormant faculties of the poet and the painter, and her animated and just remarks were a perpetual source of amusement to her father and his friend.

"Every thing is delightful to her," said the chevalier to the count, as Imogen, who had left the carriage to ascend a hill, bounded lightly on; "every thing is de-
"lightful to her, to whom every thing is
"new; her life is now in its golden era

" when hope is unalloyed by doubt, and
" pleasure is unsubdued by experience.
" Simple and unsophisticated, she enjoys
" the present without satiety, and feels
" that she is happier than she knows:
" alas! that in becoming more wise she
" should become less happy!"

Early in the evening of their second day's journey, they arrived at Lyons, and the count, too weak to accompany his daughter, gave her in care to the chevalier, with whom she visited all that was most worthy of observation in that ancient and magnificent city. Wrapt in a transparent veil, leaning on the chevalier's arm, Imogen traversed Lyons with new sensations of curiosity and pleasure. Reared in the solitary wilds of monastic seclusion, accustomed only to behold scattered hamlets or simple villages, the extent, grandeur, and population, of the first great city she had ever beheld made a strong impression on her mind. Over the superb ruins of the amphitheatre, which still preserved so fine a specimen of the taste and magnifi-

cence of the Romans, she loitered with classic fondness; and while with a different interest she viewed the cathedral, whose gothic structure formed so striking a contrast to the noble edifice of remoter but more polished antiquity, she looked at the light and elegant modern palaces of the Lyonese nobles, which held a medium between either, with pleasure and surprise. They remained two days at Lyons, where they provided themselves with necessaries for their future journey; and Imogen, seduced by the brilliant merchandize which the shops displayed, made some elegant additions to her wardrobe, with a pleasure natural to a young and gay mind: while her father, delighted only through the medium of those objects from which she derived pleasure, entered warmly into her innocent vanities, as she spread her finery before him, and amply supplied her with the means of their gratification.

A vessel having been previously hired

by their *avant-courier*, the count and his family, on the morning of the third day, embarked on the expansive bosom of the Rhone. The dawn was breaking in the east as they put off from the banks, and a favouring breeze soon wafted their light bark from the shore. Already the city of Lyons seemed to retreat from their gaze, and formed a grand perspective view, as its edifices, pointing to the rising sun, reflected back his strengthening beams; and a range of lofty mountains, still involved in the mists of twilight, formed a bold bas relievo to the brilliant fore-ground. As they coasted along the eastern banks of the Rhone, the chill sighs of the *bize* rendered the air sharp and biting; and the gloom of a grey and sombrous morning, with the bleak wildness of the surrounding scenery, shed a pensive influence over the too susceptible minds of St. Dorval and his daughter. Imogen, no longer amused by novelty, or fascinated by variety, reverted with tenderness and regret

to the object of her heart's long habitual contemplation; or, observing her father's melancholy, clasped his hand in hers, as she sat by him on the deck, and raised her eyes to his with looks of tenderness and solicitude.

The chevalier, who had thrown himself along a bench with a book in his hand, yet still observant of his companions, perceived their pensive reveries, and, anxious to chase the shadow of melancholy from their minds, approached to cheer and engage them with his conversation. Imogen asked him, as he advanced, if the air was not too sharp for her father to remain on deck? The count said he felt it rather invigorating than chill; and the chevalier replied:

"Do you know, my little friend, that "this *bise*, of whose sharpness you com- "plain, was esteemed so salubrious and "healthful in its effects by the ancients, "that the emperor Augustus erected an "altar to it?"

"And where I pay it any homage," said Imogen smiling, "it is such as we are "told the Indians pay to the infernal "deity, the adoration of fear, not of love; "to avert its wrath, not to conciliate its "favour. And yet I would rather en- "counter its effects than resign the plea- "sures this prospect affords, though rather "wildly than luxuriantly picturesque."

"It is indeed wild," said the chevalier, "but, as we advance southward, the land- "scape will glow with richer beauty to the "eye. Yet even this scene is not desti- "tute of interest: look to the right, you "have the Viverais Mountains covered "with eternal snows; on the left those "of Dauphiné, which lose their immense "heights amidst the more stupendous "summits of the cloud-embosomed Alps."

The chevalier then entered on the natural history of the country through which they passed with the combined intelligence of a botanist, a mineralogist, an historian, and a poet; and in a variety of interesting,

instructive, and elegant, conversation passed away the rest of the day. Two hours before sun-set they arrived at Romans, where they landed and supped, and retired early to rest. As this town had nothing to recommend it but its antiquity, and the count felt himself so sufficiently strong to proceed the next morning, after Imogen had rambled about the town for an hour with her amiable cicerone, they again embarked on the Rhone. It was such a morning as brings with it a new sense of existence; the air, fresh and fragrant, though glowing, without inspiring indolent softness, or animating to wild hilarity, breathed a grateful languor, and, promoting the flow of animal spirits, increased the heart's light throb, and plunged the mind in those delicious reveries whose ideal pleasures so sweetly compensate for the loss of real joys. While the count and chevalier conversed on indifferent topics, Imogen drew forth her pencil,

and realized a poetical effusion to THE FIRST HOUR OF MORNING.

When she had finished the last lines she raised her eyes, and beheld those of her father and his friend earnestly fixed on her. Confused and blushing, she attempted to conceal her tablet, but the chevalier, playfully snatching it out of her hand, read her little poetical address aloud, and Imogen soon found she had no severe criticism to apprehend from judges so partially inclined to approve. Oppressed by their eulogiums, she endeavoured to give another turn to the conversation, and inquired the names of those mountains whose chain extended along the western banks of the Rhone.

"They are a ramification of the Pyre-
"nees," replied the chevalier, "which
"stretch across the provinces of Rousillon,
"Languedoc, and Auvergne; and those
"which swell on the east are a branch of
"the Alps, which extend through the dis-
"tricts of Provence and Dauphiné; the

" mountains of Auvergne, now so remote-
" ly seen, and which appear like clouds
" floating in the atmosphere, are curious
" and romantic beyond description, and
" equally interesting to the naturalist, the
" antiquarian, the painter, and the histo-
" rian; many of them are volcanic, and
" composed of immense rocks of basaltes,
" pazzolani, and lava, but fertile in pas-
" turage and clothed with woods; while
" perched in the most romantic situations
" are to be seen castles and villages after
" the ancient Gallic manner, some of
" which it is suppoed have existed from
" ages prior to the arrival of Julius
" Cæsar."

Imogen, whose thirst of information was insatiate, persevered in those questions which were always so fully and ably answered. As they continued their voyage down the Rhone, which now fertilized the delicious plains of Provence—plains that always held so deep an interest in the heart of Imogen, while their light bark

glided amidst umbrageous islands, rich in olive and chesnut plantations, or along those banks strewed with rural villages and luxuriant vineyards, she transportedly exclaimed, "This then is Provence. De-
"lightful country! no wonder the Greeks
"abandoned their own natal plains, all-
"charming as they were, to become pos-
"sessed of your's."

"Nor that the Arabs quitted their
"Iberia," said the chevalier, "for the de-
"licious vales of Languedoc, which now
"begin to spread to the left. And look, I
"prithee, what a charming effect the sun-
"tinged spires of the ancient city of
"Montelemarl, and the grotesque turrets
"of St. Paul, which lie more southward,
"produce."

The count, whose impatience to arrive in Italy increased in proportion as he advanced towards it, refused to land at Avignon, lest Imogen or the chevalier should tempt him to visit the chateau de St. Dorval, which lay within a few leagues of that

city, and thereby retard his journey. As the day was uncommonly mild and beautiful, they took their evening repast on board, and continued their interesting voyage by moon-light. The count, wrapt in a large cloke, silent and abstracted, seemed wholly resigned to pensive reverie; the chevalier was lost in profound reflection; and while the unruffled bosom of the Rhone sparkled to the glancing moon-beam, or reflected in its glassy surface the softened shade of each surrounding object, the treasured visions of memory played lightly over the tender heart of Imogen, and love, deprived of future hope, reveled in the recollection of its expired joys.—The clock of a neighbouring convent struck twelve as their vessel anchored beneath the ramparts of the ancient castle of Tarascon, where they meant to rest for the night. The count gazed on this fine old structure with emotion, then cast a glance on the opposite shores, where the corresponding fortress of Beaucaire, noble in its ruins, hung over a craggy cliff.

"It is thus," said he to the chevalier, with a profound sigh, "it is thus, in after-"ages, the traveller shall gaze with inte-"rest and curiosity on the ruins of the "chateau de Montargis and de St. Dor-"val, when their present possessors, with "all their animosities, shall moulder in "the dust." Imogen echoed her father's sigh, and they all gazed with melancholy interest on the remains of former strength and grandeur.

"Such is the humiliating lot of man," said the chevalier, "to be survived by the "works of his hand! but life holds no "jurisdiction over virtue and genius; the "memory of succeeding ages treasures "*their* acts, and their inheritance is *im-*"*mortality*."

When they landed, the count, who felt himself less convalescent than he had been since he had left the village of Nivermont, retired instantly to the apartment prepared for him; and Imogen, whose spirits were touched with pensive languor, followed his

example, and passed a sleepless night in thinking on him with whom every joy and every sorrow, every idea and every hope, was still connected. A thousand times in the course of their picturesque voyage the recollection of the baron de Montargis, his refined taste, his ardent feelings, and extensive intelligence, shot athwart her mind; those scenes he had first pointed out to her view from the terrace of Montmorell still appeared to her fancy, and his glowing language, grateful gestures, impassioned air, and enthusiastic manner, seemed to form a striking contrast to the not less intelligent, though, to her, less attractive conversation of the grave and gentle chevalier de Sorville. "Alas!" she would mentally exclaim, as her enraptured eye dwelt on the beauties of the varying scene, "it is for thy pure and sublime "taste, amiable de Montargis, it is for the "enthusiastic ardor of thy bosom to feel "the emotions these enchanting scenes are "calculated to awaken."

The following morning the count felt himself so indisposed, that the chevalier and Imogen, though with some difficulty, prevailed on him to remain for that day at Tarascon. While they were at breakfast the chevalier mentioned the ruins of Marius's trophies, erected in honour of his triumphs over the Cimbri, which lay within a short distance of the town, and Imogen eagerly proposed to walk to it in the evening. After an early dinner, therefore, she accepted the chevalier's arm, and they set out on their little pedestrian journey. After having loitered over this monument of Roman magnificence erected to the honour of Roman heroism, Imogen with some reluctance turned from its contemplation. As they proceeded to Tarascon, the mild radiance of an evening sun shone on their path, and threw a rich glow on every object; innumerable groupes of Provençal peasantry laden with their rural instruments, returning from their labour in the vineyard or olivet, constantly saluted them

as they passed: while others, already arrived at their happy homes, danced with grace and spirit before their cottage-doors to the sound of the viol and tabor. Imogen, almost tempted to join their courantes and farandoles, stopped to observe them with a pleasure inferior only to what they seemed to feel themselves; and the fire and animation which so eminently distinguished the Provençal countenance danced in her eyes, and awakened her happiest smiles.

"When you come to reside in this "country," said the chevalier, earnestly observing her, "I shall expect to see "you a second Clemence d'Isaure, revi- "ving the spirit of ancient poesy and song, "and distributing the golden violet with "your own fair hands to the triumphant "minstrels."

"I must first become mistress of the "language," said Imogen laughing, "be- "fore I can judge of its poetical beauties; "at present it is almost unintelligible to

"me." While a deep blush suffused her cheek, at the recollection the name of Clemence d'Isaure, and the mention of the golden violet, awakened.

"I assure you it would repay the trou-
"ble of studying it," said the chevalier;
"for, besides that it is so famous in an-
"cient romance, it is by no means defi-
"cient in beauty and expression. It was
"formerly called La Langue tortue, and
"is the remains of the ancient language
"of the Narbonenses, derived from the an-
"cient Gauls, and mixed with the Greek
"from the Greek colony of Marseilles,
"the inhabitants of which to this day re-
"tain many Grecian terms and customs de-
"rived from their Helenestic ancestors."

As they walked on, Imogen caught the sound of an old ballad she had learnt at Montmorell, from the old *femme de charge* of the lady Magdelaine's household, and sung in a voice familiar to her ear: she started, looked round, and observed a female seated beneath a tree at a cottage

door, whose back was turned towards them, and who was busily occupied at her reel. Imogen, in great perturbation, advanced; the female turned round, and Imogen, to her utter amazement, beheld Beatrice, the chief embroidress to the lady Magdelaine, who, with a wild shriek of joyous surprise, dashed her reel to the earth, and threw herself into Imogen's arms. While the chevalier beheld this strange scene in silent amazement, Imogen and her old friend exchanged exclamations of pleasure and amazement at this extraordinary and unexpected rencontre. The warm and affectionate heart of Imogen throbbed with tender satisfaction at beholding this young woman, who had been the companion of her early years at Montmorell; and in whom, as the humble novice of St. Dominick, she had inspired as much respect as she could now do as the acknowledged daughter of St. Dorval: while Beatrice, who loved and hated with all the unmodified ardor of a Provençal,

testified the most extravagant delight in beholding Imogen.

"Mother of God!" exclaimed Beatrice, kissing Imogen's hand as the first flush of emotion subsided, "who would have "thought to have met dear mademoiselle "in Provence, and married too, I warrant, "to that noble cavalier;" curtesying low to the chevalier. "Holy mass! what a "handsome dress too! The lady Magde- "laine gave forty livres a yard to Zacha- "riah Mendoza, the old Jew pedlar, for "lace not half so handsome as the trim- "ming of that veil. Well, so help me hea- "ven, if the very night before you left "the chateau I had not a dream that "foretold all this! Well, this it was I "dreamed——"

"But, my good Beatrice," interrupted Imogen, who knew by experience her talent of dreaming, "what extraordinary "circumstance has led you this distance "from the chateau de Montmorell?"

"Dear lady, you shall know all, every

" syllable, if you would only condescend to " enter this little hut, and monsieur will " also do me the honour."

Imogen and the chevalier accepted the invitation; and Beatrice, after apologizing for the disorder of the cottage, which she attempted to arrange, presented seats, and leaning over the clumsy back of Imogen's chair, exclaimed: " Why, lady, St. Domi- " nick himself could not have supported " it any longer? and to confess the truth, " some folk thought that the saint had a " hand in your elopement; and the ladies " of the convent, who always looked on " you as one of the elect, did not seem to " deny it. A strange work indeed it made " through the neighbourhood: lady Mag- " delaine stormed, the friar shook his head " and crossed himself, the servants marvel- " led, the poor wept, and I thought I should " have died, for I was morally certain you " had fallen into the great pond in the " mulberry-grove, were you used to sit " and read under the shade of a tree, for

"strange sounds were heard about it
"every night. Well, this was not all,
"for Theodore eloped two days after; my
"lady's pet owl died; my own macaw
"broke his wing; and Bernardine, the
"only man in the family who could dance
"a courante, was caught with the leg of
"a capon is in hand by the father con-
"fessor on the vigil of St. Francis, and
"so was discharged. No! flesh and blood
"could not stand the château after this;
"and so hearing the old gardener of the
"convent, who, you know, lady, was my
"grand-uncle by the mother's side, and
"who brought me up from a child, and
"placed me with the lady Magdelaine,
"was returning to Provence, his native
"country, I prayed him to suffer me to
"return also with him and keep house
"for him; and so he complied, and pur-
"chased this little cottage as soon as we
"arrived at Tarascon; but, what with the
"length of the journey, and finding all
"his old friends and acquaintances dead,

"and a violent fit of the gout, he died "about a week ago, poor dear old man." Here Beatrice burst into tears, and hid her face in her hands.

"And in what circumstances has he "left thee, my poor Beatrice?" said Imogen soothingly.

"Holy rosary! mademoiselle, in no cir- "cumstances at all: what money he pos- "sessed he laid out in this little cottage "and yonder olivet, which he meant to "cultivate; but, while the priest was say- "ing mass over him, in comes his nephew, "and claims all his property, and leaves "me little better than a beggar, bating "what I saved in the lady Magdelaine's "service, and what with Jew pedlars, "astrologers, and gipseys, that was but "little; however, I intend to go to Ta- "rascon to-morrow, and offer my ser- "vices to a widow who works tapestry, "for my cousin threatens every day to turn "me out."

"Then, if you would not prefer the

"service of this widow to mine," said Imogen eagerly, "come with me. I have "only time to tell you now, that I have "found a father, with inclination and "ability to gratify every wish of my heart. "We are now on our way to Italy, whi- "ther my father, the count de St. Dorval, "is going for the recovery of his health "with this gentleman; and, if you have "no objection to leave your native country, "you shall accompany me."

"Mother of God! objection! I go to "Italy! and with you, dear mademoiselle, "who are a count's daughter!" While the tears still stood in the eyes of Beatrice for her old uncle's loss, she burst into a fit of laughter, expressive of the wildest emotion of joy and amazement. Then, seizing Imogen's hand, which she kissed a thousand times, she added: "Go to Italy! "aye, dear lady, only let me be your ser- "vant, and I will follow you all the world "over."

"We are now at Tarascon," said Imo-

gen; "but if my father does not find "himself worse, we shall leave it to-mor- "row morning for Arles; if, therefore, "you can be with us by that time, Bea- "trice—"

"Lady, I can go with you this mo- "ment, if you please," eagerly interrupted Beatrice; "my cousin will be marvellous "happy to find me out of the way when "he returns. Christ, how I talk! *Certes* "this dress would never do for traveling. "No; with your good pleasure, I will "just step in and put on my tawny- "orange camblet petticoat and vest, and "my grey velvet hood with the bugle "trimming. You may remember it, lady. "My lady Magdelaine wore it till it was "a shame to see it; but I have done it "up so, it looks like new. But then, "good saints! what am I to do with the "rest of my clothes, and my new cedar "box lined with the miracles of the twelve "apostles, and——"

Imogen, whose sanguine and ardent

character assimilated in some degree to that of the *naïf* Provençals, entered with interest into the eager impatience of Beatrice; and while the chevalier was highly amused with the mutual *naïveté* of the mistress and maid, she turned to him and said:

"I am sure we shall not leave Tarascon till late in the day. Would it not "be better to send out a servant and some "mode of conveyance for this poor girl "early to-morrow morning?"

"Will you," said the chevalier taking her hand, "consider me as your agent in "this business, and leave it me?"

"Oh! most willingly, most gratefully," said Imogen, while Beatrice curtsied low her thanks.

When they returned to Tarascon they found the count much restored by a refreshing sleep; and when Imogen informed him of her adventure and her engagement with Beatrice, he expressed that pleasure which the gratification of his daugh-

ter's wishes always awakened. While they were at breakfast the next morning Beatrice arrived, and they embarked about noon for Arles, which they reached late in the evening. When Imogen retired for the night, Beatrice, entering on her official station, presided at the ceremonies of the toilet. Anticipating the condescension of her mistress, she exclaimed as she unfolded her long and luxuriant tresses: "You need not say a word, lady, about "your extraordinary adventures since you "left the chateau de Montmorell. I heard "it all, every syllable, together with your "wonderful meeting with my lord the "count, your noble father, from monsieur "François, my lord's chief laquais, as he "conducted me to Tarascon this morning, "who heard it from the little page, who "overheard it from your own lips in the "camp when you were taken prisoner "there. Blessed saints! there is nothing "like it in all the wondrous, amusing, and "tragical tales I have ever read; not ex-

" not excepting the curious device of the " amorous shoemaker, who killed himself " with his own cutting-knife for love of a " princess. Monsieur Francois says that " you are the richest heiress in France, as " was your mother before you, peace to " the soul of the sweet lady, say I."

" But Theodore, you say, Beatrice, left " the chateau two days after me?" interrupted Imogen.

" Aye, lady; and people, you know, " will be talking, and they made some " curious guesses; for every one knew, " mademoiselle, the young page was once " going to cut his throat for love of you, " like the amorous shoemaker; however, " two days after his departure the old " wood-cutter of the forest saw him with " a party of soldiers in the town of ——; " and so then we found we were in the " wrong, and that instead of going after " you he had gone to the wars."

When the heart is engrossed by a secret but forbidden object of contemplation,

when all its powers and all its feelings are possessed with those ideas, those sentiments, *that* object is calculated to awaken, it clings with fondness to every circumstance (however remotely) connected with it, and without immediately daring to dwell on the subject of all its hidden cogitation, hovers round it with solicitous but timid fondness. It was thus with Imogen, who detained Beatrice in her room till a late hour, continued to dwell on the circumstance of her residence at the chateau de Montmorell, and mentioned several little occurrences which took place about the period of the minstrel's arrival there; fearful yet anxious to make him the subject of conversation to one who had seen and known him, and who neither suspected nor might have become acquainted with his real name and rank in life. But Beatrice, wholly engrossed with herself, her former sufferings in the chateau de Montmorell, and her present elevation, only once and slightly mentioned the min-

strel, with the certainty of his being a conjuror; and Imogen, weary of a garrulity which no longer fascinated her attention through the hope of interesting her heart, at last dismissed her, sensible of the imprudence of her wishes, yet mortified at their disappointment.

Early the next morning they proceeded by land from Arles to Marseilles. As they approached that ancient and magnificent city, Imogen observed the tender melancholy which involved the air and manner of the chevalier, who rode beside their litter, and recollected that Marseilles was the birth-place of the unfortunate canoness of St. Dominick; and the count, in whom the sympathy of friendship never slumbered, endeavoured to draw off the attention of the chevalier from the sad subject of his thoughts, by speaking of the former and present state of Marseilles, of its colonization by the Phocaci, and the strong resemblance which still existed between the modern Marseillians and their Greek

progenitors. The chevalier, whose quick apprehension instantly awakened to the solicitous attentions of his friend, with that power of mind which belongs to the truly wise, who are always under the influence of reason because they wish to be so, instantly shook off that unavailing melancholy which the weakness of inferior minds would cherish as the attractive offspring of sensibility, and replied to the count's observation:

"Your remark is perfectly just; the "national spirit of the Marseillians is "strongly imbued with the Grecian fire "of their ancestors: the same ardency "of imagination; the same copiousness, "warmth, and fluency, in speech; the "same enthusiam, credulity, inconstancy, "and vivaciousness, which distinguished "their Grecian forefathers, are to be found "in their French descendants. It is also "observable, that the Marseillians retain a "line of feature which ascertains the tes-"timony of history concerning their ori-

"gin. Observe that groupe of peasantry "reposing beneath the umbrage of that "spreading tree—there is not a French "face among them; thus a distance of near "seven hundred years has not been able "to efface those physiognomonical traces "which distinguish the inhabitants of Gaul "from their northern invaders, who set- "tled themselves in some of our most luxu- "riant provinces in the reign of Charles "the Gross; a circumstance which, to the "mind of the all-inquiring philosopher, "affords a curious and interesting subject "of reflection."

Imogen, after this observation, gazed with eager curiosity on every figure that saluted her eye. In every rural nymph, who flitted by them laden with herbs she had culled from the mountain's brow, or the implements of the vineyard, she fancied she observed the soul-beaming countenance of a Sappho, or the elegant graces of an Aspasia; and in every rustic who courteously saluted them as he passed, the

air of a Pericles, or the head of an Alcibiades.

They arrived at Marseilles early in the evening, and while supper was preparing the chevalier proposed to Imogen to walk, who delightedly acceded. The chevalier directed her steps towards the harbour. Imogen, in whose mind nature had profusely sown those seeds from which the painter's and the poet's richest blossoms spring, contemplated in animated delight the picturesque scene this beautiful harbour afforded. Spreading its glassy bosom from the base of those lofty and surrounding mountains, in whose overhanging shade it appears to repose, exposed to the southern sun, and glittering to its rays, it formed a brilliant contrast to the dark massy colouring of the back-ground; while in the delightful walk its ports afforded were to be seen an assemblage which amused the eye by its variety, charmed the imagination by its singularity, and interested the mind by the train of reflections it awakened.

"Here," said the chevalier, pointing to the various groupes of traders, Turks, Greeks, French, English, and Italians, all dressed in their respective national habits, "here is not only a rich field for the "painter who would delineate the boldest "groupings in the most characteristic "costume, but for the moralist and phi-"losopher. This scene comprehends "within its circle not only an epitome of "nations, but of mankind. Self-interest "is the governing principle which ac-"tuates the aggregate, and lures the Mus-"sulman and the Christian, the infidel and "the Jew, the cold deliberate northern "and the sanguine inhabitant of the "south, to the same point of attraction. "Observe how the pale face of that wan-"looking Englishman, the animated coun-"tenance of that Italian, the dull brow of "that Dutchman, and the sombre visage "of that Turk, are all marked by the same "predominant expression, under the dif-"ferent modifications which being a suc-

"cessful or an unsuccessful dealer occa-
"sions; while the appropriate scenery
"around them serves as a powerful stimu-
"lus to the exertions of interest. Wild,
"barren, and sterile, the opulence of com-
"merce and the efforts of industry have
"counteracted the niggard intentions of
"nature, and, amidst unfruitful wilds and
"barren rocks, erected the sumptuous
"dwelling of mercantile prosperity in
"luxuriant gardens of artificial beauty and
"forced fertility."

Imogen, delighted though fatigued, returned in animated flow of spirits to her father, who listened to her lively and pointed details in all the fond triumph of a doating parental heart. Her *naïveté*, her charming and her original manners, her curious felicity of expression, and her elegant and refined taste, where fancy or imagination were called into action, gratified his pride as deeply as her modest, simple, and ingenuous, character awakened his affection and esteem. Had she

not been his daughter, he had loved, esteemed, and admired, her; but as his child, as the child of his Julia, she was the object of his idolatry. At supper the count proposed remaining the following day at Marseilles, in order to afford Imogen the gratification of visiting every thing worthy of being seen, besides that he had himself some business to transact with a banker in the town. Imogen, delighted at the indulgence, kissed her father's hand in token of her gratitude, and the chevalier offered himself as her Cicerone, and was thankfully accepted.

CHAP. XXII.

O father Abraham, what these Christians be!

SHAKESPEARE.

THE next morning, as they sat at breakfast, their host of the inn entered the apartment, and after a low preliminary bow he advanced to the count, and, drawing a ring from his pocket, presented it to

him, saying:—"I have made bold to take "the liberty of requesting monseigneur's "opinion of that ring, being no great "judge of such matters myself, and having "a *little something* at risk with respect "to its value."

The count took the ring, and, having looked at it, said: "My good friend, I "would advise you to consult a lapidary; "but, although I cannot appreciate the "identical worth of the ring, I can assure "you it appears to me to be a diamond "of great value, and the amethysts which "surround it are the most beautiful I ever "beheld. What is your opinion, cheva-"lier?"

Imogen, looking at it as she took it in her hand, uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

"What is the matter?" said the count and the chevalier in a breath.

"That ring," said Imogen in a hurried tone, "was *mine*, and given me by Rosalie "de Vilette, the minor canoness of St. "Dominick."

"God of heaven!" exclaimed the chevalier as he examined it, "I remember it "well; it was her mother's dying legacy; "she wore it suspended round her neck, "and here are the initials of her name, "which I myself carved on it as she "shewed it me bathed with tears of filial "regret. Even now that moment is pre-"sent, for on that day I beheld her for "the last time."

The chevalier's eyes were suffused with tears, and he pressed it to his lips; while the count, all amazement, enquired from Imogen how she lost it. She related the circumstance of the soldier's forcing it from her at the chateau le Noir, and he turned round and demanded from the host how it had come into his possession.

The man, all aghast, after a moment's hesitation, replied: "Why, if mon-"seigneur will have the goodness to grant "me his patience, I will relate the whole "story. This then it is: a week come "to-morrow, about midnight, and just as

"I had attended some noble chevaliers to
"their room, a stranger, mounted on a
"sorry mule enough, rode into our yard.
"He was wrapt in an old black cloke, and
"by the light of the lamp looked deadly
"pale. He was scarcely able to speak,
"and with difficulty we understood from
"him that he had come to Marseilles to
"take shipping in a vessel bound for Spain,
"and that within three leagues of the
"city he had been attacked by a party of
"robbers, who had wounded and plun-
"dered him of almost all he possessed.
"Holy saints! he was no pleasant guest,
"and at such an hour too; however, we
"assisted him to alight, carried him to
"bed, and sent for a surgeon, who from
"the first had a very bad opinion of him.
"Just as he was beginning to get a little
"better, his wounds took a bad turn, and
"his life is now despaired of. As we have
"been at some trouble and no little ex-
"pence, and as every body should look
"to themselves, I brought him up my

" bill this morning; and he gave me this " ring, and said he wished to dispose of it, " but I would not venture the sum he " asked until I had somebody's opinion " who knew more of these matters than " myself."

" Should we not see this person," demanded the count of the chevalier, " and " try to discover how this ring came into " his possession?"

" Certainly," said the chevalier; " for, " independent of its intrinsic value, it " must be inestimable to your daughter, " as the gift of her dearest friend."

" Inestimable indeed!" said Imogen, bathing the kiss she impressed on it with a tear; " and this unfortunate man, who is " perhaps a foreigner, without friends or " money, may require our assistance. Let " us visit him, dear sir; a little personal " attention in such a situation is more " grateful to the heart of misery than all " the proffered services in the world."

The count pressed the hand of his

daughter, and the chevalier said, "There "is as much truth and sensibility in that "assertion as benevolence and humanity." Then, turning to the landlord, he demanded if the stranger was confined to his bed. The man answered no, that the warmth of the weather had obliged him to leave it, and that he was then lying on a couch at an open casement.

"Lead the way then," said the count; "a visit of kindness is never unseason-"able."

The host proceeded, followed by the count, Imogen, and the chevalier, to the apartment of the invalid. As they entered it they were met by a friar in the habit of St. Dominick, who was going out. The invalid was wrapt in a large cloke, stretched on a couch; from his wrist hung a rosary, in his right hand he held a crucifix, over which he appeared to pray devoutly; his left supported his head.

"Monsieur," said the host as he approached, "here is monseigneur the count

" dead? did I not see her buried? It was " *for her child* she died, I know; yet why " comes she to me? It was I who saved " her child from eternal perdition!"

The chevalier and the count, though they suspected the senses of Stephano to be disordered, yet comprehended his allusion to the countess de St. Dorval, and perceived that the likeness between Imogen and her mother deceived him into the belief that it was the countess herself he beheld; while at the hint he dropped of having saved the child, the chevalier, looking expressly at the count, said, addressing the invalid, " Look up, Stephano; this " young lady is the only daughter of the " count and the late countess de St. Dor- " val. In what respect does she owe her " eternal preservation to you?"

Stephano, raising himself on his arm, and gazing in silent but evident amazement on Imogen, after a few minutes self-collection, exclaimed: " Yes, it must be " so. How like her mother! Seventeen

"years back I bore her an infant in these "arms, bore her from heresy and perdi- "tion to eternal life, and placed her un- "der the care of my patron saint—I left "her in the wheel of the convent of St. "Dominick."

"Merciful God!" exclaimed the count; "it was *you* then who carried away my "child! you caused her mother's death!"

"I will answer no questions," said the Spaniard coldly, "until you first inform "me when you discovered her to be your "child, how long she remained in the "convent of St. Dominick, and what faith "she professes."

"I discovered her to be my child," said the count, in some agitation, "not two "months back, by a strange coincidence "of circumstances, by a cross she wore "round her neck, and by the mark on "her temple. She has lived in the con- "vent of St. Dominick since she was "placed there until that period, and she "has been educated in the Roman Catho- "lic faith."

"Jesus be praised!" fervently exclaimed the Spaniard, raising his hands and eyes to heaven: "in saving her *soul* from "perdition, I have redeemed my own; in "snatching *one* being from the heresies "of Satan, I have purchased my own sal-"vation, and now I shall die in peace!" Then, faint and exhausted, he sank back on the couch.

The count, trembling with anxiety and emotion, and fearful lest the death of the gloomy bigot should frustrate his desire to know the secret mystery which hung over the long-lamented loss of his child, eagerly exclaimed: "Speak, Stephano! in mercy "to yourself and to me, if you expect to "be forgiven the miseries you have caused, "say by what means was I deprived of my "child, and to what purpose?"

"I have no reason to conceal," said the Spaniard, with renovated strength, "what "I triumph in having effected."

Then, after a moment's pause, while the count, Imogen, and the chevalier, seated themselves round him, he continued:

"When I entered your father's service
"as his page, who brought me from Spain,
"you were my younger by five years; yet
"you sometimes did me the honour to
"make me the companion of your boyish
"sports. One day, as we played at quoits,
"I said something to displease you, and
"you struck me. I dared not return the
"blow, but I never forgot it. Shortly
"after my lord's gentleman died. I suc-
"ceeded to the situation, and became his
"confidant and friend as well as his ser-
"vant. When your marriage took place,
"I felt the sufferings of your father as if
"they were my own. 'Had he married a
"beggar,' said the count to me, 'I had
"forgiven it; but a heretic, and a ward of
"the de Montargis's, Stephano, *that* I
"will never pardon!' Some months after,
"when we returned from Paris to the
"chateau de St. Dorval, the count one
"morning called me into his oratory.
"'Stephano,' said he, 'my son is on the
"point of becoming a father; but I will not

" be the progenitor of a race of heretics.
" Madame St. Dorval is a bigoted Hugo-
" not, and her father (an enemy to the
" League) was accessary to the death of
" my illustrious relative St. André. She
" has beauty and genius, and my son will
" consign my grandchildren wholly to her
" care. Dare I confide further in you?
" Will you engage to assist me in saving
" the souls of my progeny?' I pledged
" myself, by all that was sacred, to be true
" to whatever service he designed me.
" 'Go then' said he, 'enter the family of
" my son on the plea of being discarded
" from mine: you will not be the less
" welcome on that account. When that
" unduteous son becomes a father, seize
" on the first opportunity of securing the
" child, and send it to France. I have
" made Sebastian, my servant and your
" countryman, your colleague in the bu-
" siness. He is already gone to Italy,
" and settled himself in the neighbour-
" hood of the villa de Fiora. To him

" you will consign the child. If it is a
" female, he is to place it in the convent
" of St. Dominick; if a male, in the priory
" of the Augustines. The superiors of
" both are known to me as eminent in
" piety, and devoted to the promotion of
" the true faith. The infant shall be re-
" ceived, as it were, on the charitable in-
" stitutions of the convent, but the ab-
" bess of St. Dominick, or the grand
" prior, shall afterwards be instructed as
" to the rank and name of their infant
" member. When it has attained its
" eighteenth year, and the principles of
" religion are sown in its mind beyond
" the power of being eradicated, I will
" own it as my grandchild. Meantime,
" do you secure your situation in my son's
" household, that I may claim your ser-
" vices on a similar and future occasion.'
" My lord then, having bound me by the
" most solemn oaths never to reveal this
" circumstance until his grandchild should
" have attained its eighteenth year, pre-

" sented me with a purse of gold, and pro-
" mised me double the sum when I should
" have fulfilled the sacred trust commit-
" ted to my charge.*

" The next day I set off for Italy. I
" was received into your family, my lord;
" yet I thought, or fancied, the countess
" beheld me with no favorable eye. Mean-
" time I endeavoured to habituate your
" infant daughter to my person: I fre-
" quently walked out with her attendant,
" and eased her of her burthen by carry-
" ing the infant home in my arms. One
" day, as we returned, the countess per-
" ceived us from the window, and I heard

* This species of holy kidnapping was practised by Madame Maintenon with singular success after the revocation of the edict of Nantes by Louis XIV. A recent instance of this description of pious fraud took place in the kingdom of Ireland, when the young earl of G—— was carried off from his family, by a French jesuitical tutor, to France, lest the heresies of his mother should affect the orthodoxy of his religious tenets.

"her say to the nurse, 'Ursuline, do not
"trust the child to that fierce-looking
"Spaniard. About this time, you, my
"lord, set off for France. The cause of
"your journey was not known, but the
"reason generally assigned was your fa-
"ther's indisposition. Your absence
"seemed the most favorable opportunity
"for executing a project which even my
"growing affection for your infant, as
"well as the publicly-professed heresies
"of its mother, urged me to accomplish.
"It was a few days before your expected
"return that I beheld the countess, and
"her woman with the infant, walk to-
"wards the wood; and I overheard ma-
"dame St. Dorval say that she would
"send back the child. I flew to Sebas-
"tian, who lived on the skirts of the
"wood, and we returned, muffled up in
"long clokes, just as Ursuline was walk-
"ing back towards the villa with her
"charge. The countess was out of sight;
"all was still and solitary. We seized the

"terrified Ursuline, who, almost lifeless
"with terror, vainly endeavoured to pro-
"tect her sleeping charge. Leaving
"Sebastian to secure the woman beyond
"the power of effecting her own libera-
"tion, I flew with the infant to his cot-
"tage. In a short time he returned. I
"gave him a letter for your father,
"wherein I described the person of your
"child, the mark on her left cheek, and
"the cross which had belonged to the
"lady your mother, which was suspended
"from her neck, and which she had her-
"self chosen from a number of more
"brilliant trinkets, as if Heaven itself
"inspired her; I then delivered her to Se-
"bastian, who that night set off for
"France. Having left the lady Imogen
"at the convent of St. Dominick, he
"was to return to the chateau de St.
"Dorval, to receive the large reward
"promised him by my lord the count.
"When I returned to the villa de Fiora,
"I found all there horror, consternation,

" and amazement. What followed you
" already know, my lord. I did not
" think my lady's affliction for the child
" would have gone so far; and, though
" I did not regret the step I had taken,
" I could not support your agony for
" the loss of your wife and child. The
" night of your arrival, I fled from the
" villa de Fiora. I pursued my way to
" the chateau de St. Dorval, to claim
" my reward, and return with it to my
" native country; but what was my con-
" sternation to find the old count no more!
" a circumstance the horror and confu-
" sion on the night of your arrival pre-
" vented me from hearing. Thus de-
" prived of my recompense, and dreading
" the weight of your displeasure should
" the part I had acted reach your ears, I
" determined to leave France; when at the
" gates of St. Dorval I was met by Sebas-
" tian, who came there on the same bu-
" siness as myself, after having left the in-
" fant at the convent of St. Dominick.

"When he heard of my lord's death, "stung with disappointment and rage, he "threatened to discover all to you. This "brought on words between us; we were "both armed, we both fought, and I was "the victor; he expired at my feet, con- "fessing, in the agonies of death, that the "jewels which the child wore when I de- "livered her to his care he had purloined, "leaving nothing with her but the cross. "These jewels I secured, and returned "to my own country, from the apprehen- "sion that you would shortly arrive in "yours."

Here, faint and exhausted, the Spaniard paused; while on the countenance of the count de St. Dorval struggled the awakened feelings of the husband and the father, wound up to vengeance on the bigoted destroyer of his peace, with the humanity of the man unwilling to disturb the last sad hours of the dying sinner. Imogen hung on her father's shoulder, and with tender caresses endeavoured to soothe

the perturbation of his spirits; while the chevalier adroitly awakened another tone of thought, by taking the ring from the count, and, addressing the invalid, demanded if he had not lately served in the king of France's army? A hectic of a moment flushed the wan cheek of the Spaniard, and, after a short hesitation, he replied, with gloomy firmness, "Yes, and "I deserted from it; but I am now be- "yond the influence of all human ven- "geance. What is the power of all the "kings in the world to him who is on "the point of leaving it for ever! It was "necessity, not inclination, forced me to "enlist in the French service. After an "absence of seventeen years, during "which I sustained some trials, I return- "ed to France with the Spanish troops "under the duke de Mansfield. My offi- "cer treated me ill; I resented it, was "doomed to condign punishment, and de- "serted to the enemy; but shortly after, "becoming possessed of a considerable

" sum of money, I left the royal army to " return once more to my native country. " The fear of being taken up as a de- " serter obliged me to take such unfre- " quented paths as would secure me from " discovery. When within a short dis- " tance of this city, I was attacked and " plundered by banditti, who deprived me " of every thing but a ring I concealed in " my bosom."

" And how came you by this ring?" demanded the chevalier.

" *That* it concerns thee not to know, " monsieur," returned the Spaniard gloomily; " my confessor has been al- " ready here."

" You are right," said the chevalier coolly; " it concerns me not to learn what " I already know. This ring, which the " master of the inn has put into our pos- " session, you took with a purse of gold, " about two months back, from a young " person confined in the chateau le Noir."

The invalid changed colour, a deadly

paleness overspread his face, and he faintly replied: "Well, sir, it is true; and "what then? it was the purchase of his "life and liberty."

"Stephano," interrupted Imogen, "do "you not recollect *me?* *I* was the per-"son from whom you took this ring and "purse in the armoury of chateau le Noir. "But you did indeed give me life and li-"berty, and I am still your debtor."

Stephano looked at her in eager amazement.

"Yes," said the chevalier, "made-"moiselle de St. Dorval was flying from "the monastic life to which your mis-"taken and bigoted zeal had doomed "her. Disguised as a minstrel, she was "taken prisoner in the chateau le Noir, "and would probably have lost her life "but for the investment of the chateau "by a party of the royalists. This ring, "which you took from her, was given her "as a legacy by the deceased canoness of

" St. Dominick, and bears the initials of " her name."

The invalid looked wildly round; his ghastly eyes alternately fixed on Imogen and her father, till, resting on the former, he exclaimed, " My crimes have not been " few, but I have saved thy soul from per- " dition; and He who died for us all will " have mercy on mine."

As he spoke his voice failed, his eyes closed, and he sank back on the couch. Lethargy, produced by the rapid mortification of his wounds, was creeping over his senses; the characters of death were seizing every feature, its chillness stiffening every limb. The chevalier drew the count's arm through his, and, taking Imogen's hand, led them out of the apartment, consigning the dying man to the care of the host, who had remained in the room during the whole extraordinary scene. When they reached their own apartments, the count, embracing Imogen, exclaimed in great agitation, " My child,

"my beloved child! you are a second
"time restored to me, and mystery no lon-
"ger clouds the joy of possessing thee."
Then, taking the chevalier's arm, he added,
"Suffer me to retire for a short time;
"this extraordinary occurrence has awa-
"kened feelings, emotions, I am but little
"able to sustain."

The chevalier led him to his own apartment, and returned to Imogen. "Such," said he, "is the dreadful effect of bigotry.
"The mistaken zeal of your grandfather
"was the efficient cause of your mother's
"death, your father's misery, and your es-
"trangement from your parents and the
"world; but let us imitate the delicacy
"of your father, who has not, in the acu-
"test agony of awakened sorrow, breath-
"ed, even to the ear of friendship, one
"reproach against your grandsire's me-
"mory. Let us, in the consciousness of
"kindred frailty, judge the actions of the
"living as we would wish to be judged,
"and tread lightly o'er the ashes of the
"dead."

When the count joined them at dinner, he appeared more dispirited and weak than he had been since the commencement of their journey. In the evening Stephano expired. When the count heard of his death he shuddered; then, after a long reverie, he put his purse into the chevalier's hand, and bid him present it to their host as a reward for his humanity to the deceased, and to defray the expenses of his interment.

CHAP. XXIII.

Dolce sentier
Colle, che mi piacesti
Ov'e ancor per usanza amor mi mina
Ben riconosco in voi l'usate forme
Non lasso in me.
De cor d'un figlia
La sventura maggiore
De tutte le sventure e il suo duolore.

METASTASIO.—CATONE.

THE next morning they embarked on the Genoese gulph for Italy; a brisk gale

filled their sails, and the day clear and bright rendered the rich scenery of the surrounding coasts discernible on every side; the maritime towns of France, which skirted the picturesque shores, gradually seemed to retreat behind them; a lofty tower or glittering spire alone marked their situation; while above the lowland scenery, and to the north of the state of Genoa, arose the Appenines' stupendous heights, and the island of Corsica appeared to float on the blue unruffled bosom of the sea, forming a beautiful and striking object to the south. Imogen, whose susceptible spirits easily regained their native tone of animation, gazed with eager delight on the receding coast of France; while, as they softened into perspective, a tear swelled to her eye, and her lips pronounced, "Adieu, dear France!" while her heart only sighed, "Adieu, be-"loved de Montargis!" Meantime the count alone seemed insensible to the charms of a scene the chevalier took par-

ticular pleasure in pointing out to his daughter: *his* heart, saddened by those gloomy visions which the occurrence of the preceding day had conjured into being, seemed lost in the recollection of its former woes, and dead to the enjoyment of its present happiness. It was in vain that the tender and all-solicitous Imogen pointed out to his observation the gradually discernible and glowing beauties of the Italian shores, which rose on the eye in all the rich luxuriancy of the happiest soil and climate, covered with the rich drapery of the vineyard, shaded with lofty groves, and spangled over with smiling villages, magnificent palaces, and venerable monasteries; the count had "that within" which mocked the power of external influence to subdue; and in approaching Italy he only felt he approached the tomb of Julia. After a quick and delightful voyage, they landed at Leghorn; while the mind of Imogen, as for the first time she touched Italian ground,

glowed with that enthusiasm and pleasure which result from feelings awakened by reflection, taste, and learning; and from the consciousness of being on that country immortalized by the attestations of history, consecrated by the effusions of genius, hallowed by the atchievements of valour and heroism, and enriched with all that art and science could bestow.

They proceeded along the delicious banks of the Arno to the villa de Fiora, which they reached in the evening of their second day's journey. It was a light and elegant structure of the Doric order, embosomed in a vale, whose luxuriant beauties might have rivaled the fabled charms of Tempe; its portico, of Parian marble, descended by a flight of steps to a branch of the Arno, and commanded a bold view of the surrounding country, and a distant prospect of the city of Florence; its groves of orange and citron shed a perpetual odour, and the shade of its extensive woods bestowed perpetual freshness. The

delight, the rapture, with which Imogen contemplated this fairy palace, was tempered by the recollection of her unfortunate mother, and subdued by the increasing and impressive melancholy of her father. Her heart beat with violence as their vehicle stopped before that portico which her mother had mentioned in her last letter, and where she had so often sat to watch the return of her lord, while the tears stole down her colourless cheek as she caught the inanguished glance of her father's expressive eye. The chevalier, far from unmoved, with that self-subjection which always distinguishes eminent virtue, repressed his own emotion to administer to the sufferings of his friend, whom he supported on his arm to the house; while Imogen, catching his presence of mind, walked beside her father, tenderly drawing his arm through her own. The count, as he slowly passed through the portico and vestibule, paused and looked round; then, raising his eyes to

heaven, mournfully shook his head, pressed the hands of his daughter and his friend, and proceeded in melancholy silence; while tender and mournful recollection, throbbing at his heart, awakened the spring of affliction, and shed over his countenance and form that expression of profound and disconsolate woe which no hope enlivens, no time can efface. Exhausted and wholly overcome, when he reached the apartment where he had taken a last leave of his wife, he swooned in the arms of his friend; while Imogen, no longer able to suppress her feelings, wept bitterly, and indulged in the agony of a heart which trembled for the loss of its dearest tie. When the count recovered, he was conveyed to bed, and, wearied out by the excess of his emotions, he soon fell into a soft and profound repose.

"Such," said the chevalier, as he stood at a window conversing with the weeping Imogen on the subject of her father's af-

fliction, "such is the effect of immode-
"rate sensibility, unregulated by reason.
"After a lapse of eighteen years, your
"father suffers as keenly as in the first
"period of his misfortune: but he *suffers*
"because he *wishes* to suffer; because
"his heart, long given up to the indul-
"gence of sensibility, revels on the *luxury*
"of *woe*."

"Oh! my dear sir," interrupted Imogen, "is it then so easy to subdue the "pangs of lacerated feeling, to heal the "wounds of a bleeding heart?"

"No," said the chevalier; "if it were "easy, there were then no merit in the "effort; but it is *possible;* and where "possibility is on the side of virtue and "reason, it should not be neglected for "the indulgence of emotions purely self-"ish. It is a sorry truth, my sweet young "friends, that this life is but probationary "to another scene of trial and suffering; "and to encourage that exquisite and "acute sense of feeling, that refined sen-

"sibility, that delicate and sensitive tone "of mind, which awakens the sensation "of agony or bliss to its last strained "pitch of suffering or enjoyment, is, from "the paucity of the latter and the many "subjects for the former, to render ex- "istence insupportable, to deprive socie- "ty of that portion of assistance which "individually we are obliged to furnish, "and to pervert the use of that reason "which Providence has mercifully en- "dowed us with as the counterbalance "to our feelings, our passions, and our "weaknesses."

"You are right, sir," said Imogen, extending to him her hand, "you are always "right; with you I always agree; but in "the present instance I cannot help feel- "ing with my father."

The chevalier kissed the hand presented to him; and Imogen crept softly to her father's couch, to watch his slumbers and pray for his recovery.

In a few days the first emotions of re-

vived affliction subsided in the bosom of the count, and a calm and pensive composure took possession of his mind. To repose in the shade of that portico whose polished pillars had so often reflected the form of Juliet; to fix his languid gaze on those inanimate objects over which her eyes had beamed, was an indulgence sad though grateful to his heart; while the animated looks and cheering prattle of his blooming daughter smoothed the furrow of his care-worn brow, and chased the tear from his colourless cheek. Imogen not only feigned an unusual flow of vivacity, in the hope of re-animating her father's drooping heart, but really felt that exhilaration of spirits the air, the climate, and scenery, united to youth, health, and imagination, were so calculated to inspire. Hurried away by a wild delirium of pleasure, as she pursued her rambles through scenes of fairy enchantment, even the secret passion of her heart lost its pensive sadness; and while a thousand tender

recollections of him who had inspired it floated on her mind, and blended their hues with all its emanations, from the faded blossoms of her blighted love sprung a thousand "tender buds of hope." De Montargis was not yet the husband of mademoiselle de V——, and it was possible he never might; while that possibility existed, despair could boast no empire over the mind of Imogen. One morning, after a long delightful walk on the banks of the Arno, she returned in that flush of health and spirits which always restored the native gaiety of her character, and, entering the saloon where the chevalier and the count sat conversing, she took the hands of the latter, and, pressing them to her lips, demanded with animation:

"Tell me, dearest sir, do you not in-
"hale a new existence in this delightful
"country? do you not feel that health
"and pleasure are borne on the wing of
"every fragrant gale?"

The count, with an affectionate smile,

embraced her. "This charming child," said he, turning to de Sorville, while a faint hectic flushed his cheek, "throws "me back into that sweet era of life when "happiness, under a thousand varying "forms, stood tip-toe to receive me; "while, like the careless butterfly, I still "fluttered on the sunny surface of exist- "ence, in eager wandering quest after in- "finite variety and infinite pleasure."

"But, my dear father," said Imogen, "does not every age bring with it its own "pleasure, as each season is endowed "with a charm peculiar to itself? If the "gay livery of renovating Spring delights "the eye, and the odorous freshness of "Summer charms the sense, do not the "mellow and sober charms of Autumn "awaken a tender interest in the mind, "and the close-knitting socialties of Win- "ter reach and warm the heart?"

"This assertion comes sweetly from "thy lips, my sweet child; oh! may it be "prophetic! and may each season of this

" changeful life come fraught to thee
" with some new blessing, richer than that
" which has gone by! may the flush of
" thy early sensations, as they expire on
" the wing of Time, give place to more
" solid enjoyments; and may the raptur-
" ous dreams of thy youth, as they subside
" in the truths of experience, be succeed-
" ed by that stable and permanent feli-
" city which virtue and wisdom only con-
" fer!"

Imogen imprest a tender and grateful kiss on her father's hand; then insensibly falling into a reverie, after a short silence she exclaimed:

" And yet, to survive the power of
" awakening, of receiving happiness; to
" watch the gradual decay of each sweet
" emotion, the ardour of every feeling
" fading into inanity; to weep over the
" wreck of each beloved tie, and feel
" that every succeeding day tolls out the
" death of some sweet sensation with that
" of youth; oh! who would live for that?"

"I have!" said the count emphatically, clasping his hands; "hope's delusive me-"teors now cease to play on my insensate "heart; and the visions of recollected "happiness do but sadden the mind they "once in reality gladdened."

"My dear friend," said the chevalier, rising and seating himself between them, as he took a hand of either, "it is the folly "of man to suffer the immediate blessings "of the present to escape unenjoyed, in "the vain anticipation of future evil, or "the useless regret for expired felicity; "it is for the wise only to use the present "to the promotion of virtue and happi-"ness; looking back without regret, and "forward without fear; and to employ "the existing moment well, is to secure "the possibility of both. What say you, "my sweet Imogen, to becoming the dis-"ciple of this almost-Epicurean philoso-"phy?"

"Of whatever philosophy you are the "founder," said Imogen expressively, "I

"shall become its disciple, convinced that "which you have chosen for the rule of "your life must be the best; but too "happy to be permitted to repose the "frailty and weakness of my own mind "on the strength and excellence of your "better reason. To be considered as "your pupil, to hope at a future period "to be worthy of becoming your friend, "to be guided by your counsels, and sti- "mulated by your example in the pursuit "of all most worthy to be attained, would "be the boast and happiness of my life."

As she spoke, the ardor of her manner brought an involuntary blush to her cheek, and, with an air of affectionate simplicity and tender animation, she placed both her hands in his. A deep scarlet suffused the pale cheek of the chevalier; his eyes flashed fire, and the hand with which he scarcely returned the pressure of Imogen's trembled. The count de St. Dorval arose; a radiant beam of delight and satisfaction illumined his countenance: pressing the hands of

his daughter and friend in his own, he exclaimed:

"De Sorville, to you and to your care I "consign this treasure of my soul: when "death shall have robbed her of a father, "be thou unto her as a parent; when "death shall have robbed thee of a friend, "seek in her heart for a revival of that "tenderness her father bore thee, and "thou wilt not be disappointed; and, "oh!——" The count abruptly paused; something of importance seemed to agitate his mind and flutter on his lips: while Imogen, construing his silent emotion into the language of her affectionate fears, pressed his hands to her lips, and said, "I "hope, I feel, it is yet long reserved for "me to claim no father but you."

"Come, come, my dear friend," said the chevalier, cheerily, "I must chide "you for the indulgence of this truly "childish melancholy: would you give "an artificial poignancy to the strong na-"tural sensibility of this too-sensible be-

" ing, and fling over the brightening dawn " of her life those clouds your too sensi- " tive feelings have hung upon the even- " ing of your own?"

" God forbid!" said the count emphatically; " may she not inherit, much less " imbibe, the dangerous and fatal sensi- " bility of her parents!" then, alternately embracing the chevalier and his daughter, he left the room. Imogen was on the point of following, but, fancying she observed in the chevalier's eloquent eye a lurking wish that she should remain, she seated herself again, and drew her embroidery frame towards her. The chevalier was still silent; and, after musing a moment at the window, threw himself upon its seat, and drew a book from his pocket. Imogen, insensibly reverting to the solemnity of her father's last address, continued to muse and work, forgetful of the cause which first detained her; when, accidentally raising her eyes to the face of the chevalier, she observed his earnestly

fixed, not on the book which lay open in his hand, but on her, Imogen, in some confusion, asked what was his study?

"An analysis of the human heart," said he, with a pointed smile.

"If you do not think the subject above "my comprehension," added Imogen simply, "perhaps you would have the good-"ness to read aloud."

"Above your comprehension!" returned the chevalier, flinging away the book, and seating himself by her. "No, Imo-"gen, I know not of any study above "your comprehension, though experi-"ence may be requisite to guide you in "this."

"Imogen, with a smile full of expression, said, "I fear, my dear sir, you esti-"mate my capacity by the standard of "your partiality rather than your judg-"ment."

"It is your modesty only, Imogen, can "lead you to believe it: no, if I suppo-"sed there existed a being who thought

" more highly of you than I do myself, I " would willingly forego my own opinion " for the adoption of his."

Imogen blushed and bowed at a compliment so little expected, and the first ever paid her by one little in the habit of flattering. After a short pause, the chevalier added, " I should wish, perhaps, " for the sake of my charming friend, and " the world through which she has to " struggle, that those elevated qualities " with which she is eminently endowed " were tempered by those minor quali- " ties, so necessary to oppose to the little " every-day vicissitudes of life. Your " understanding, of the first order, and " formed for the reception of the subli- " mest truths, will oft neglect the observ- " ance of those lesser documents which " the world hourly calls into practice; and " that mind, created for the boldest ef- " forts, will insensibly soar beyond the " little forms which that quality the world " calls prudence dictates. And should

" you, my charming friend, in your walk
" through life, ever betray in your con-
" duct or actions the frailty of human na-
" ture rather than its strength, it will be
" only in those trivial occurrences which
" cautious stupidity and prudent dulness
" never violate; but, where an extraor-
" dinary effort of the soul is required,
" yours will be equal to the noblest bold-
" est exertion; where the heroism of the
" mind is exacted, you will ever be the
" heroine. But you seem so overpower-
" ed, my too humble friend, by eulo-
" gium, not merely prophetic, but al-
" ready earned, that we will change the
" subject. I have just got letters from
" France; one of a disappointing nature
" from my sister, madame de Rosemont,
" who is now at Paris, engaged in a law-
" suit with the heir of her late husband,
" which will defer her journey to Italy
" for some months; this I particularly re-
" gret, not only on my own account but
" yours. My sister, though not a stri-

"king, not a brilliant, is an amiable,
"character; and I have looked forward
"with great pleasure to a friendship be-
"tween two persons so deservedly dear
"to me."

Imogen, in terms equally warm and polite, regretted the detention of madame de Rosemont, who, as the friend of the canoness of St. Dominick, and the sister of the chevalier de Sorville, she was prepared to love and esteem: while, with an air affectedly indifferent, a throbbing heart, and an apparent eager attention to her work, she demanded if his letters brought any news?

"My letters," said the chevalier, "were
"all on business, save my sister's, who
"merely says, that the most prevalent to-
"pic of fashionable chit-chat is the mar-
"riage of the baron de Montargis with
"the lady de V——. This, you know,
"is quite a lady's theme, and my sister is
"absolutely descriptive:—here are her
"own words." The chevalier then read

as follows: "The splendor of these nup-
"tials exceeds any thing of the kind ever
"seen at Paris; the ostentatious propen-
"sities of the two fathers were called into
"action, and each seemed only anxious
"to rival the other in magnificence and
"shew: the king and the whole court as-
"sisted at the ceremony: there was held
"in the morning a tournament, in hon-
"our of the occasion, at the arsenal; the
"bride bestowed the prizes on the victor;
"in the evening there was a masquerade
"at the hotel de V——, and the next day
"the bridal party set off for the chateau
"de Montargis in Provence."

A bolt of ice seemed to shoot through the heart of Imogen, and circulate its deadly chillness through every artery in her frame: her temples throbbed with agony, her head grew giddy, her eyes appeared covered with a mist, her languid pulse scarcely fluttered with the throb of life; her lips, burning and parched, trembled without the power of articulation;

and her cheeks alternately betrayed the deepest blushes or the deadliest whiteness. Endeavouring to catch at some little presence of mind to veil the agony of her feelings, she drooped her head on her work, and faintly made some appropriate but inarticulate observations.

The chevalier, who still appeared engaged with his sister's letter, replied, "The marriage of the baron de Montar-"gis with mademoiselle de V—— was "on his part, I am pretty certain, one "of those efforts of reason which distin-"guish a great mind, conscious of its "own strength, and determined to exert "it. The inclinations of the baron were "not, I believe, at first on the side of "this union; probably some romantic "attachment, some youthful infatuation, "enslaved his wishes and his heart, and "opposed themselves to his reason and "his prudence: but the victory was at "last declared in favour of the latter;

"and many years of felicity, I hope and "believe, will be the reward of a tempo-"rary sacrifice of his inclinations." Then, folding up his letters, he said he would go and seek the count; and left the apartment without appearing to notice or perceive the no-longer-concealed emotion of Imogen.

CHAP. XXIV.

Par d'illustres efforts les grands cœurs se connoissent.
J. CORNEILLE—ARIADNE.

——— The intellectual power
Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
And smiles;—the passions gently sooth'd away,
Sink to divine repose.
AKENSIDE.

DREADFUL to the soul is that moment when the lingering light of hope is finally extinguished, and all its sweet energies of fond expectation are buried in the gloom of despondency; when the sad certainty of irrevocable disappointment falls like a thunderbolt on the heart, and reason, dispossessed of her empire by the shock, can neither assuage nor combat its effects. There was nothing more to be expected than the union of the baron de Montargis with mademoiselle de V——,

yet Imogen heard it as if she expected it never were to have taken place; and heard it with the same emotion as the certainty of being lost to happiness for ever would have awakened. Voluntarily to have resigned her lover, and such a lover, was an act of heroism grateful to the ambition of her mind and self-love; and to be conscious that his passion survived its hopes, soothed her heart for the sacrifice it had made: but what is so difficult to be understood as the secret workings of the heart? Imogen, in resigning de Montargis, had not resigned every hope of being his, much less of being beloved. She believed he would still find means to protract or evade his marriage with the heiress de V——, and time, or the death of his father, might vanquish that discord that subsisted between the two families: in short, when love exists, the heart is prodigal in its fanciful speculations; and Imogen loved with the same romantic enthusiasm, the same profound tenderness and refined deli-

cacy as in the first era of awakened passion. She was not created to inspire or to feel sentiments of indifference: the fire of genius, the ardour of affection, the vivacity of temyerament, the poignancy of feeling; that vivid, that excessive sensibility to every species of happiness, which rendered her enjoyments so exquisite, her sufferings so acute, still spoke to her in the voice of Nature, and said, "Thou "wert created to love and to be loved; "thou wert created for all the most pre- "cious relations of society." But the object which she believed alone capable, alone worthy, of filling her heart, of awakening all its energies, was now lost to her for ever. How often, since her separation from Montargis, had she compared the past and present inanity of her life with those exquisite but short-lived moments, when she felt all the value of existence; when the subtile spirit of felicity circulated through every vein, and all the energies of the mind, all the raptures

of the heart and imagination, combined to render her blessed. To feel great and powerful emotions was requisite to her happiness, by the very organization of her mind; and to live without some object capable of awakening them, was to her the death of the soul.

Full of the jealous fears of affection, Imogen believed that the speedy union of Montargis was the effect of his vanquished love for her. "I might have "known," said she, while tears of agony coursed her cheek, "that passions so "vehement, so ardent, must be short-"lived in their effects; but, enamoured "of the deception of my own heart, I "fondly believed what it would have "been misery to doubt."

If any thing could add to the anguish of that heart, it was the difficult obligation of concealing its woes. Imogen was not only doomed to suffer without the soothing consolation of pouring her afflictions in the bosom of a friend, but

to hide them from every eye under the veil of assumed complacency. Her father, but little observing, and wholly unsuspicious of the cause, appeared not to notice its effects; but Imogen trembled to encounter the all-piercing eye, the all-penetrating observation, of de Sorville. She had, indeed, long cherished some faint suspicion that the secret of her tenderness for de Montargis was not unknown to him; and his preliminary eulogium on the strength and heroism of her mind, previous to his informing her of the baron's marriage, seemed to intimate that he was on the point of putting that heroism to the test. The love of de Montargis was alone more desirable to the heart of Imogen than the esteem and admiration of de Sorville, whom in virtue and understanding she considered as the first of all created beings; and that ambitious desire of eminence and of intellectual superiority, which seemed breathed into her soul when it was first quickened,

determined her on proving herself worthy of that respect and admiration she had already inspired.

"Yes," said she, "you shall not be "deceived, great and amiable de Sor- "ville. The eulogium you have pro- "nounced shall be prophetici: where an "extraordinary effort of the soul is re- "quired, mine shall be equal to the boldest "exertion; when the heroism of the mind "is exacted, I can be the heroine. If "thou dost not suspect the weakness of "my heart, my conduct shall never be- "tray it; and if thou dost, the command I "hold over myself shall extort your es- "teem and receive your admiration."

Such was the resolution which Imogen, even in the first moment of awakened suffering, had formed, but which, till the expiration of three suffering days and sleepless nights, she had not the power to reduce to practice. Reason was then become the basis of her endeavours, and the indignant pride of disappointed love

her auxiliary. A tear no longer dimmed the lustre of her eye, or impressed its trace on her cheek. Those frequent absences from her father's side gradually diminished, and the solitary walks of the morning's dawn or evening's twilight were no longer pursued in the unfrequented shades of de Fiora; while she congratulated herself that her melancholy escaped her father's observation, who was deeply engaged in erecting a magnificent monument to the memory of his wife on the spot where she had parted with her child. Still more did she triumph in the absence of the chevalier, who had gone to spend a few days at Florence. Always great where great occasions offered, and where the sacrifice was repaid by the consciousness of those superior powers which had effected it, Imogen not only adminstered to her "mind diseased" the salutary prescriptions of reason, but, by one bold effort of the soul, to pluck up the hidden sorrow by the root:

"I was not born," she proudly exclaimed, "to be the slave of passion. Reason "was not given me to slumber for ever; "talents were not bestowed on me to wi- "ther in indolence! I will employ them, "and I shall then have no leisure to be "wretched; I will destroy every object "which by nurturing my weakness op- "poses itself to my felicity." Then with a tearless eye, but an unsteady hand, she drew forth the last note and letter she had received from the baron de Montargis, and, averting her head, tore them into a thousand pieces; and drawing from her bosom the beautiful picture of the minstrel, without bestowing on it one tender parting glance, she placed it in a little casket, which had belonged to her mother, the lock of which was so peculiarly constructed that no key but its own could open it. Having locked it, she advanced to the window, and threw the key into the Arno, which flowed beneath; determined at some future period, when time and re-

flection left not a wreck behind of her former tenderness, to return the picture to its original.

When the chevalier returned, Imogen flew to receive him with eager satisfaction smiling in her countenance. She found him seated in the portico with the count. As he advanced to meet her, she fancied his glance seemed to search her soul; yet she met its inquiries with an eye-illumined with the bright beam of self-approbation, with a cheek glowing with the triumphant blush of conscious self-subjection. Seating herself between her father and her friend, while the latter still held the hand so affectionately presented to him, and gazed on her with looks whose penetration was tempered with delight at a reception so flatteringly cordial, Imogen, with that air of *naïveté* which always rendered her so infatuatingly pleasing, said, "My dear "chevalier, you will scarcely believe how "I have longed for your return."

"Scarcely indeed, Imogen," said the chevalier with a meaning smile.

"Then call on me as a witness, my "dear," said the count, with obvious satisfaction; "for I do not think I per- "ceived a smile on your lip since he left "us; and that, chevalier, is at least a "presumptive proof in favour of the vera- "city of her assertion."

Imogen, colouring to the eyes, continued in the same strain of gaiety, yet avoiding the chevalier's glances: "You "must know I have formed a thousand "schemes, which you must help me to "execute; in short, every age has its "education, and it is time *mine* should "begin. You all seem to forget that the "education of a monastery is not calcu- "lated for the world; that my knowledge "of those pious disputes between the Do- "minicans and the Capuchins, on the or- "thodox cut of the monastic cowl, will "scarcely be an equivalent for my want "of those elegant acquirements so requi-

" site in the polished circles of life; and
" that, though deeply versed in celestial
" mysteries, a little knowledge of tem-
" poral forms might be of some use: in
" fact, I would know every thing, and I
" know nothing. In the scale of refined
" accomplishment I would rank high, and
" yet I am reduced to the lowest degree.
" With a mind whose activity demands
" unceasing occupation, I do and learn
" nothing; and in a country where the
" arts and sciences received their birth,
" I am neither a painter, a statuary,
" nor a musician, and yet I would be all.
" My ambition is boundless, my talents, I
" believe, not despicable, and my applica-
" tion unwearied. My dear father, my
" dear chevalier, assist me to second the
" intentions of nature, and to render my-
" self more worthy of your esteem and ap-
" probation. Only place me in the path
" of improvement, and you shall find I
" will soon rise above the dependence of
" a pupil. I have always entertained

"the most elevated ideas of the human "mind, and believed it is only requisite "it should possess the ambition to excel "in any pursuit to attain to consummate "perfection, admitting it to be endowed "with those principles of taste which form "the elements of all our talents, of all "our knowledge, and which must arise "from the consciousness of our own native "feelings."

Imogen ceased to speak, while the energy of her manner still blushed its ardor on her cheek. The count, embracing her with a look of tender triumph, warmly applauded her resolution; and, while he regretted that the state of his own delicate health prevented him undertaking the grateful task of superintending those studies, in whose pursuit she panted to engage, he insinuated a hope that the chevalier would not decline the interesting office of his representative. De Sorville, with eyes still ardently fixed on the face of Imogen,

awakened from his abstraction by this appeal, and with great earnestness and great modesty replied, that to be the preceptor of mademoiselle de St. Dorval was an honour too flattering to be declined, yet too important to be embraced without the apprehension of conscious inability. "So far, however," he continued, "as experience can regulate the "ardent sallies of genius, and point its "energies towards objects worthy of pur- "suit, my little stock of already-acquired "information shall not be wanting to as- "sist the intuitive powers of her supe- "rior mind. The steady pursuit of "knowledge, of useful as well as elegant "acquirements, so invariably betrayed by "our sweet young friend, is the distin- "guishing characteristic of genius united "to good sense. It is only for intel- "lectual mediocrity to repose in the "stupid satisfaction of moderate and "homespun acquirements, too easily at- "tained to be much prized, when pos-

"sessed, either by the possessor or the "observer. It is for the superior mind "to toil with unwearied assiduity through "progressive improvement to ultimate "perfection; stimulated by obstacle, not "subdued, nor to halt in the path of fame, "contented with an *ovation* where a *tri-* "*umph* awaits the termination of their "endeavours."

Imogen's eyes glistened with pleasure as she listened to these eulogiums, so delicately paid, so grateful to her ambition and her heart, and so powerfully stimulating to her exertions.

The commencement of the ensuing week beheld the villa de Fiora transformed into a little *Lyceum*. Masters of the first eminence were engaged from Florence to intruct the eager, the ambitious Imogen in painting and music; a Spanish *fandanguera*, celebrated for the peculiar excellence of his stile of dancing and the composition of his ballads, modified the wild graces of nature into move-

ments of determined elegance, and added to the elastic step, the airy bound, of youthful hilarity, all that art could bestow "of *the poetry of motion.*" The chevalier himself was her preceptor in the English and Italian languages; in the grammatical construction, her knowledge of the learned languages considerably assisted her, while her acute and correct ear made her mistress of the best accent and pronunciation, and she soon spoke "*la langua Tuscana, nè bocca "Romana;*" while her acquisition of the English, less promptly attained, from less opportunities of practice, and a remote analogy to the tongue she was accustomed to speak, was still sufficiently rapid to enable her in the course of a few months to read some of the most elegant English poets, to peruse with facility the effusions of lord Surrey's muse, who had himself tasted of the Italian delicacies of composition, and transfused them into his own elegant works; and to be *à portée* of

some of the happiest dramas of Shakspeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher. But her voice modulated to all the melting softness of the Italian language, her airy imagination delighted with the style of its fanciful expression, and her warm heart eagerly embracing its tender epithets of endearments, to clothe its own glowing feelings, it soon became familiar to her as though every other were yet to learn. The chevalier, while he applauded her rapid and extraordinary attainment of this charming language, was yet extremely cautious in his selection of its authors. On a shelf appropriated in her own library to their works were to be found a part of the Comedia of Dante, replete with a brilliancy of wit which almost compensates for the severity of its satire; the entire of his *Inferno*, which, though obscured by an obsolete language and not destitute of blemishes, displays the vast power of all-creative genius; the Eclogues and Poems of Boccace, who at

once carried his native language to its highest perfection; the divine effusions of the enamoured Petrarch; the sonnets of Francis Sachette; the immortal productions of Tasso and Ariosto; and the unfading beauties of Lorenzo de Medicis' charming muse. The chevalier also procured for her many of the lighter French works of modern date, which the library of Montmorell did not afford; and she read with peculiar pleasure the poems of François de Martini, one of the best poets of the age; the sportive lays of Rimi de Balleau, the French Anacreon; nor was old Pierre Ronsard forgotten, who had exhausted so many tender verses to the honour of his Mary, Silena, and Cassandra. While her eager mind thus luxuriated in "the feast of reason," and the genius of past and present ages contributed to satisfy an appetite that grew with what it fed on, the "flow of soul" ever awakened to the magic influence of music's witching spell. When the mind re-

posed from the fatigue of scientific research or studious occupation, and the imagination, weary of pursuing the blazing meteors of genius, sank to the enjoyment of its own delicious visions, then the harp of Imogen breathed its sweetest strains, and her clear, soft, and flexible, voice gave to the melting sentiment of passion or the frolic effusion of fancy a superadded charm. With all the advantages which nature, taste, and ability, added to the best models in painting and statuary, and the first artists Italy then produced, the progress of Imogen in these arts was still much slower than in music. Aspiring and impatient to become a proficient in that art of which love had been the inventor, she soon became not only an eminent proficient, but the foundress of a stile of singing and accompaniment then exclusively her own. The music of that day, like the poetry, full of elaborate contrivance, lost, under the influence of her superior genius and original taste, its intricate

and uninteresting character, and, imitating the accent of sentiment and passion, gave to the soul the grateful intimation of all its own ecstatic sensibilities.

Endued with all those perceptions of mind which form the principal ingredient in the character of a poet and the painter, her residence in a country strikingly impressive from the glowing beauty of its climate, the gay and smiling aspect of its picturesque scenes, was well calculated to excite those enthusiastic emotions which give birth to poetic effusion, and awaken the imitative arts into life. Wandering with nature in her wildest haunts, the most delicious recesses, the vivacity of Imogen's mind rose in proportion to the pleasures it received from external objects, and every day witnessed the fantastic birth of some little poetic extravaganza, some glowing view of nature in her happiest aspect, or some musical effusion that breathed the rapt soul of the enchanting musician.

To the elegant and liberal pursuits of

the constantly-occupied Imogen the society she mingled with highly contributed by the power of assimilation and the influence of sympathy. The chevalier's long-settled habits of privacy and retirement, the count's still pensive spirits and declining health, rendered their visitors of necessity few and select. The diocesan bishop, a man of patriarchal life and manners; signor Orsalto Giustini, the elegant translator of Euripides; the signor Dolce, who had so happily transfused all the pathos and spirit of Sophocles into his charming version of Ephigenia in Aulis; the beautiful signora Lucrece de Gongaga,* so justly celebrated in the 16th century for her wit, learning, and literary productions; with a few others, more distinguished by their virtues than the brilliancy of their talents, were the superior and elected few which enlarged the family circle of the villa de Fiora.

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* Her works were collected and published at Vienna. *Vide Bayle's Dictionary.*

But the heart does not always enter into the occupations of the mind; the splendid images of fancy may woo but cannot always win its attention; the bright effusion of genius may lull but cannot always still its pulse, or lure from its contemplation the vision which memory presents. To the comprehension of love nothing is so difficult as the science of forgetfulness: the efforts which the strong mind of Imogen had made towards its attainment had not wholly failed, but had not yet wholly succeeded. But she had much yet to learn, for she had yet much to forget. Recollection still delighted to dwell on that era when love's sunny beam first shone on the horizon of existence, and tinged every thought, every object, with its glow.—Fancy still loved to linger on those anticipated hours of rapture when matured affection should bestow its last best blessings; but those hours had fled on to the goal of *time*, and had not shed from their wings as they flew the golden promise of

her sanguine hopes. Resigned rather than happy, her life passed on in a passive series of sober satisfaction, unillumined by those meteors of blissful emotion which were wont to flash athwart her heart, and awaken its pulse even to the wild throb of felicitous delirium, and unmellowed by those tender emotions she was so calculated to feel and to inspire.

Meantime the life of the count de St. Dorval seemed gradually to wear away with an almost-imperceptible decline. The blue skies and genial gales of Italy had failed in their promised effects, and the vital tide of existence ebbed faintly in his exhausted veins. The tender, the afflicted, heart of his child had long turned traitor to her wishes, and deceived them into a belief which melancholy conviction hourly dissipated; but, at the expiration of ten months from the period of their arrival in Italy, the approaching dissolution of the count was obvious even to the heart of Imogen. Many a tear fell in secret from her eye, and many

a sigh died unperceived on her lip, while with almost health-bestowing smiles and unwaried solicitude she hung over the couch of parental dissolution. The count for some time continued to linger in that state of gentle decline which neither confined him to his apartment nor suffered him to remain long from the repose his couch bestowed. The chevalier de Sorville, who almost suffered pang for pang with Imogen, and whose life seemed to hang upon the slender thread by which his friend's was suspended, one morning, that the count appeared something less weak and oppressed than usual, set out on business to Florence. In taking leave of Imogen there was a visible emotion in his air, his manner, that caught her observation and awakened her surprise. He raised not the hand presented to him, as he was wont, to his lips, and his eyes avoided the cordial look that sought his, as if the basilisk's spell lurked in their beam.

"We shall see you soon, dear cheva-

"lier?" said Imogen with an affectionate smile.

"I am not the master of my own des-"tiny," was his reply; and he gently loosed his hand from the grasp of hers, mounted his horse, and rode away.

Imogen pursued his receding form with her eyes till it was lost in distance, then heaved an unconscious sigh, and went to her father's apartment. The count was reading in his arm-chair.

"I hope, my dear sir," said Imogen, seating herself by him and taking his hand, "the chevalier will soon return. It is "wonderful how necessary to the happi-"ness of our existence is the society of "those we love, and are habituated hourly "to see and to hear."

The count flung the book from him, and, with looks of peculiar elation and delight, exclaimed: "Imogen, this is the sub-"ject I longed most to speak of to you. "'Tis you who have banished the cheva-"lier de Sorville from the villa de Fiora."

"My lord, I!"

"My beloved, give me for a moment "thy patient attention. It is my heart's "sweetest consolation that in leaving you "in a world to which you are so new, for "which you are so little calculated, with "all those tender ardent feelings glowing "at thy unsophisticated heart, I shall leave "thee to the joint guardianship of the "most amiable of women, the most vir- "tuous of men. Need I name the duchess "de Guise and the chevalier de Sorville? "In that brilliant sphere of polished life "where your rank will destine you to "move, where your accomplishments, "your talents, will enable you to glitter "a star of no-inferior magnitude, let the "duchess de Guise be the orb around "whose attractive influence you may re- "volve without the fear of being hurried "away in the vortex of pleasure. But "the chevalier de Sorville—O my sweet "child! look up to him as the pillar of "integrity, of virtue, of honour, on which

"thou mayst repose thy timid and inex-
"perienced bosom, as the friend, the com-
"panion, the *husband*, of thy future life."

A paleness that might rival the livid hue of death bleached the cheek of Imogen, then suddenly gave place to a blush of crimson dye; her hand trembled in her father's grasp, and her eyes, fixed on the earth, strove to conceal the confusion and surprise that lurked in them from his eager gaze. The count observed her emotion, and, construing it as the blushing effects of discovered passion, continued: "I have "long with secret triumph observed the "lively sensibility which the chevalier has "betrayed to the perfections of my sweet "child—long observed the reciprocity of "tenderness and esteem which, under the "veil of friendship, has mutually stolen into "your bosoms; and the most perfect, the "most refined sympathy forming the basis "of a fervent and unalterable attachment, "which, exempt from the wild storms of "passion, unembittered by doubt, unop-

"posed by fortune, sanctioned by pru-
"dence, and approved by reason and vir-
"tue, promises a long series of felicitous
"years, a permanency of happiness which
"death only can destroy. It was always
"the darling wish of my heart to have a
"daughter worthy of this eminently-vir-
"tuous man, with whom I could bestow
"on him that property, the greater part
"of which I owe to his generous resigna-
"tion in my favour. Heaven has accom-
"plished the wish of my heart, and Imo-
"gen has become the agent of heaven's
"mercies to her father."

The count paused, and Imogen, over-whelmed by the varying conflict of her feelings, hid her face in his bosom and wept. The count, kissing from her cheek what he believed to be drops of "*plenteous* "*joy*," added: "Compose thyself, my "beloved girl, for thou hast nothing to "fear. I have had this morning a long "conversation with the chevalier, who, "with all that humility which is the con-

"stant attribute of super-eminent merit, "dares not credit the belief of having "awakened a tenderer sentiment in your "bosom than what friendship might in- "spire; and, with the self-denial of an "ever-wakeful reason, has refused to listen "to me on the subject until I had first "breathed it to you. With a delicacy "which you will understand and feel, he "has gone to Florence, until a mandate "from your hand recalls him. O my "darling child! this silence, these tears, "these blushes, are the sweet confirma- "tion of my dearest and long-cherished "hopes; and, whatever were the suffer- "ings, the trials, of my past life, this mo- "ment, this blessed moment, overpays "them all."

The count strained to his bosom the almost-lifeless form of his daughter, and tears which fell from the pure source of parental bliss dimmed his eye, and conceal- ed from his view the conflicting feelings painted in the half-averted countenance of

the object of his heart's solicitude. Released from the embrace of her deceived and happy father, Imogen covered her face with her handkerchief, and hurried out of the room. This inartificial équivoque of appearance confirmed the fond suspicion of the count's long-secret wishes, and obtained for the amazed and agitated Imogen time for self-collection. She mechanically wandered towards the portico, and, throwing herself on a seat beneath the shadow of its Parian canopy, she gave a loose to those new and overwhelming emotions the subject of her father's conversation had awakened. Neither the ardent affection which bound her by the strongest ties of consanguinity and sympathy to her amiable parent, nor the enthusiastic fondness for his mild and attractive character which grew in her bosom with hourly increase, could blunt or soften that penetrating observation which she intuitively possessed, and which betrayed to her view in the character of her father a

sanguine and romantic cast which neither time nor experience had subdued, and an impetuous ardor of temperament that tinted with the colouring of certainty the faint and irregular sketches of every visionary wish, of every baseless hope.

Imogen was not free from vanity, but vanity itself could not construe the attention of the chevalier into a warmer sentiment than what the solicitude of an anxious friend might authorize; and so entirely had she ranked him on the same scale of affectionate regard as that her father occupied, that, with a thrill of indescribable emotion and repugnance, she shrunk from considering him as a lover whom she had hitherto regarded as a parent. From this uneasy and distressing idea she took shelter in the belief that the phantom which shocked her imagination was but the illusion of her father's ardent wishes and sanguine hopes. But from these wishes, these hopes, whither could she fly? To chill the glow that warmed the retreating stream of

life in each exhausted vein, to extinguish the spark of hope that fed the decaying flame of fading existence, to cloud the golden beam which flashed on the last sad hours of an expiring father, and *still* the pulse which palpitated a rapturous throb in the broken heart of a doating, dying, only, parent:—

"God forbid!" she exclaimed; "oh "no! never shalt thou look upon thy "child as the instrument of heaven's re- "tribution for that one act of filial dis- "obedience, for which thy life has been "one unvaried scene of expiation. No, "beloved father! be still deceived, and "still enjoy the transient happiness thy "fond delusive wishes have conferred."

Imogen sighed heavily and wept with bitterness, but still they were "tears that "delight and sighs that waft to heaven;" for sweet are the tears of virtuous resignation in the first moment of reason's triumph over passion, and grateful the sigh which breathes from the heart that has subdued

its own wishes to promote the felicity of another. Imogen was still lost in reverie when two of the domestics, with horror and consternation in their countenances, summoned her to her father's apartment. She had not power to inquire into the cause of this emotion: her fears were eloquent but dreadful interpreters. The count had not parted with his daughter half-an-hour when he was seized with an apoplectic fit, and when she reached his apartment she found him supported in the arms of his esquire, almost speechless, his features distorted, and every limb convulsed. Imogen, almost lifeless, had still presence of mind to send off instantly for medical assistance; and the count, laid on his couch, his head supported on the bosom of his weeping child, gave the first intimation of returning reason by pronouncing (though inarticulately) her name. She answered in the cordial endearing accent of fond and filial tenderness, and when the physicians arrived they found the count

composed, though faint and exhausted.—During the remainder of the day Imogen left not for a moment his pillow, requiring of the physicians an attendance equally assiduous, while to her softly-breathed and anxious inquiries they returned no consolatory reply to soothe the apprehension of her afflicted heart. The count took what was offered him, but appeared either unable or disinclined to speak. From his bed-side, and at his request, Imogen dispatched a billet to require the chevalier's return, and towards evening he appeared something better, and, in a voice perfectly articulate, expressed a wish that his director (a friar in a neighbouring convent) might attend. At this request Imogen could no longer repress her emotion, and, falling on her father's pillow, wet it with the tears of a breaking heart. With that deceptive strength which generally precedes dissolution, the count raised himself on the couch, and, drawing his daughter towards him, said, in an articulate voice,

and with an air of cheerful resignation, "Grateful to the soul of a parent is the "tear of filial tenderness which falls from "the heart of his child; but, when it "streams from the source of unavailing "yet agonizing sensibility, his own weeps "tears of blood. Thou canst not have "deceived thyself with hopes which pos-"sibility rejected. To that which is in-"evitable be resigned; indulge the feel-"ings of humanity, for by him who is "*all love* were they given to thee; but "strengthen them with the efforts of thy "reason, for to that purpose was it be-"stowed on thee by him who is *all wise*."

Imogen dried her tears, and faintly smiled assurance to his wishes; but her smile was the eloquence of anguish suppressed, not subdued. The count folded her to his bosom, then throwing himself from the couch knelt beside her; her hands were folded in his, his eyes with hers were raised to heaven; the prayer of the father's soul quivered in silence on his

lips, the supplication of the child's heart irradiated her countenance; their mingling souls seemed to float on a mutual sigh of religious rapture that ascended as incense to heaven. "*Bless my child!*" was the parent's benediction; "*Save my father!*" was the daughter's prayer: then, falling into each other's arms, their hearts seemed to catch a divine impulse from each other's throb; the world disappeared, and the spirit of mortal resignation and eternal hope descended from heaven like a dove on their heads.

The hour was stealing on the eve of midnight; the director of the count, after a conference which lasted a considerable time, had been dismissed; the physicians had retired to rest; the page, esquire, and nurse, in a low voice chatted together in the anti-chamber; and the ever-wakeful, ever-solicitous, Imogen still hovered round the couch of her father. Exhausted by his conference with the friar, the count had early in the night fallen into a profound

sleep, and the wish which Imogen felt to have him removed to his bed was counteracted by the fear of chasing the doubtful repose, which her hopes suggested might bear returning health upon its wing; for when does hope desert the heart where the fond solicitudes of apprehensive affection live? With a step whose every fall was noiseless as the sigh of the noontide breeze, Imogen closed the door of the anti-chamber, lest the gossip murmurs of the attendants should awaken her sleeping parent; then, drawing aside the curtain which skreened a glass-door that opened on a terrace, a broad mass of moon-light fell on her father's face; a burning hectic glowed on his cheek, the apartment was close, the night hot and oppressive; she gently opened the door, and, leaving it something more than half-closed, walked down the terrace, in the hope that the air would refresh her spirits and dissipate the painful throb that beat on her temples. She knew the watchful care of the count's attendants,

and she wished to indemnify herself for the fatigue she should undergo in sitting up during the remainder of the night by the relaxation of a walk. The air was breathless, the atmosphere clear, blue, and unclouded, the moon unveiled even by a vapour; at a distance the murmurs of a cascade stole on the soft empire of silence, but so faint that the echo of the surrounding hills gave not existence to the sound. Imogen, descending the marble steps of the terrace, glided on towards a grove of pines, whose spiry tops were silvered with the slanting moon-beam, and which arose like an amphitheatre behind the villa towards the summit of an overhanging mountain. It was the grove in which Imogen had been torn from her nurse's arms, and she entered its sombre recesses filled with those solemn and profound emotions the anxiety of her heart, the tone of her mind, the awful stillness of the hour, and the pensive twilight gloom of the scenery, were calculated to inspire. It was a mo-

meet when feeling and reflection were equally alive, when the soul delights to rove unrestrained in the variety of its own cogitations, and when the world and all its splendid nothings recede from the eye of thought, and leave the unshackled mind to expand in the region of sublime contemplation. Filled with those ideas her father's situation was calculated to inspire, the hopes of Imogen, brightening in the light of faith, pointed towards eternity, and she beheld herself, after a transient period of earthly probation, approach the regions of everlasting felicity, and rise a pure and disembodied spirit, re-united to the parents of her mortal affection, and mingling her soul with tears in the fruition of everlasting bliss. Dazzled with the splendid image of religious rapture, animated by the tender impression of human affection, the mental eye of Imogen reposed its gaze on the milder and less enthusiastic theme of reflection. She remembered the day when the solicitude of

affection was a stranger to her heart, when the sigh of sorrow breathed not on her lip, nor the tear of anxiety swelled to her eye; when the tremulous vibrations of hope and doubt varied not her heart's light pulse, and when nothing pained, for nothing touched her. Then the suspense, the agony, and struggles of her riper feelings and maturer bliss rushed to her memory: her voluntary resignation of the baron de Montargis, the anguish she had endured for her father's doubtful fate at Laon, and the nature of those feelings with which she now contemplated the gradual but perceptible dissolution of her only parent: while, as she wept in the filial sorrow of her heart, she almost felt that the indifference of an unconnected existence, and the pang of awakened sensibility, are nearly brought to a level by the perspective good and evil attached to them.

Her thoughts then, by a natural but melancholy association of ideas, turned on the death of her mother, and at that mo-

ment she heard a footstep echoing to her own. Wholly under the influence of a gloomy and agitated fancy, Imogen shuddered with horror, the ghastly countenance of Stephano appeared to her eye as she had last beheld it; and again she almost supposed herself in the power of such a ruffian as had before borne her away on the same spot; the next moment dissipated her fears, and the voice of the chevalier arrested her rapid pace.

"Thank God, it is you, sir!" said Imogen, holding out her trembling hand to him: "never was your presence more wel-
"come, nor more wanting, than at this
"moment."

The chevalier held the hand presented to him to his lips, in uncontrolled emotion; then gazed in silence on Imogen's face, with an expression in his countenance and eyes, that instantly recalled to her mind her late conversation with her father, and the delicate situation in which she stood with the chevalier. Under the influ-

ence of momentary feeling, she suddenly withdrew her hand from the grasp of his, and turned away her head to conceal those blushes the moon's pale light could not have betrayed. The chevalier again took her withdrawn hand, held it firmly, looked earnestly in her face, and, in a voice no longer tremulous from agitation, said with pointed emphasis:

"The letter which I received a few "hours back, dictated by your father and "written by yourself, is the cause of my "immediate return from Florence; and at "this moment there is but one sentiment "buoyant in my mind, and that arises "from the tender anxiety, the too-just "apprehensions, of friendship only: in a "moment such as this could I, ought I, "to harbour another idea?"

In this speech, while it conveyed a tacit reproach to the heart of Imogen, she again beheld the chevalier, as she had hitherto always perceived him, the most virtuous, the most reasonable, the most elevated of

human beings; and, catching the assurance of her own manner from the firmness of his, she asked him, as they walked on, if he had seen the count?

"No," he replied; "the attendants said "he had slept for some hours, and had not "yet awakened. Supposing you were, as "usually, occupied in hovering round his "couch, I made no inquiries for you, and "oppressed with heat, from the rapidity "with which I rode, and the stillness of the "night, I walked out to enjoy the cool "freshness which these shades bestow, and, "with some surprise, beheld a female form "gliding before me at a distance; I fol-"lowed, nor was my amazement lessened "to find that form was Imogen's."

Imogen accounted for her having left her father's room, and confessed, that a train of melancholy, but not uninteresting reflections, had beguiled the time, and ideally shortened the length of her ramble. She then proposed returning to the house, and they struck into a cross path, that led

to it by a shorter direction, when an abrupt opening in the trees discovered to the eye the mausoleum of the countess de St. Dorval. The softened glances of night's mild luminary shed a solemn light on the cypress which drooped round it, and were reflected back from the snowy surface of the shaft of the monument, which arose from a broad base of black marble; while the deepening shades, which formed the back ground, gave a gloomy and awful effect to the solemnity of the whole. The chevalier drew the arm of Imogen through his, and attempted to lead her away, but she appeared transfixed to the spot; then, with a profound sigh, she turned her eyes on the chevalier in a supplicatory glance: they were full of tears, and with a gentle violence she led him towards the monument of her mother. Filled with those emotions the hour, the scene, the object, of their contemplation were calculated to inspire, the friend, the child, of the countess de St. Dorval approached the spot sa-

cred to her memory. Imogen, withdrawing her arm from that of the chevalier, advanced to the steps of the monument, when she perceived a tall human figure wrapped in dark drapery kneeling at its base. At her wild exclamation of horror and amazement, the chevalier sprang forward, and the figure attempted to rise, but fell prostrate to the earth; the chevalier raised the almost-visionary form in his arms, and as the moon-beam fell on the face of his nearly-lifeless burthen, Imogen and the chevalier beheld the countenance of the count de St. Dorval. Amazement for a moment absorbed every other sentiment, but it soon gave way to solicitude and apprehension. Imogen hung over him in speechless emotion, while the chevalier endeavoured to recover him from the faintness in which he lay.

"My father, my dear father!" sobbed Imogen, bathing his hands with her tears, "will you not speak to me?"

At the sound of her voice the count

opened his eyes, and, casting their glances toward heaven, exclaimed in a faint voice, "Julia, thou art heard! I come."

"Alas!" said Imogen, "do you not "know your child?"

"My child!" repeated the count, "my "child!" then, looking earnestly and alternately at the chevalier and Imogen, he exclaimed: "My child! my friend! yes, "yes, now, now I revive; now to die, is "to die most blest—at the shrine of my "love, in the arms of my child, of my "friend. It is now almost all over—Imo-"gen! de Sorville!"

With an effort of strength he endeavoured to rise, while the arms of his daughter and his friend supported him. He tottered towards the base of the monument, then knelt on the second step, Imogen and the chevalier kneeling on either side. The moon, as it fell on the wrapt countenance of St. Dorval, touched it with an expression more than human. His eyes were raised to heaven, and while his lips qui-

vered in silence, his soul appeared to hold communion with his God. Then looking alternately at Imogen and de Sorville, he smiled with the benignity of a saint and the tenderness of a father; and, taking a hand of either, he united and pressed them in his own, and, wetting them with the last tear that fell from his mortal eye, endeavoured to speak, but the words died on his lips. He bent his head over their clasped hands, and seemed to implore a blessing on their union: then raised his eyes to heaven. A lambent flame played in their glance, his countenance was illumined with its light; he stretched his hands forward, and raised his almost-impalpable figure from its recumbent posture: like the prophet Isaiah, he seemed gradually to drop the veil of immortality, and steal from earth to heaven. Without a sigh, without a struggle, his whole form pointing to the gaol of his impatient desires, his spirit fled to that source of light of which it was an emanation; his mortal remains dropt in the embrace of his child and his friend.

From the visionary dreams of an elated fancy and debilitated mind, the count had been awakened by his daughter opening the door of his apartment; in the dream of his rest he had seen his Julia; her form still glowed on his awakening thought, and he wished to visit the shrine of his love, before that moment when even love itself should be no more.

Wrapt in a loose robe, with the renovated strength which is so frequently the precursor of death, and supported by a staff, he crept towards the monument of his wife, only to expire at its base; the victim of refined natural feelings, wrought up by a romantic indulgence to an exquisite and fatal sensibility, which, becoming progressively acute, was finally incapacitated from sustaining the least of those "rough brakes which Virtue must endure," and from which human nature, even in its most perfect state, is not exempt.

CHAP. XXV.

Here is my hand.
You shall be as a father to my youth:
My voice shall sound as you do prompt mine ear;
And I will stoop, and humble my intents
To your well-practised wise directions.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE grey beam of returning twilight trembled on the waves of the Arno, and bathed its pale light in the dewy bosoms of those rich flowerets which shed their aromatic influence along its delighted shores; the morning breeze crept on the undulating bosom of the river, and sighed away its existence among the foliage of the surrounding trees: the last star of night glittered above the broken line of mist that arose from the summit of the hills; and the effusive glow of day, as it shed its strengthening light over the kindling firmament, rolled in columns of crimson and

gold along the eastern horizon, and ushered in the great visible agent of light and life. All nature smiled; but keen is the pang of the orphan's heart, when, after the transient reprieve of momentary repose, sleep flies its tear-dewed pillow, and it awakens to the consciousness of its great and recent loss; when, after a temporary suspension to its filial woes, it remembers that with the last day's dewy sun-rise it had a parent, but that that day shall return no more.

On the night of her father's decease, the orphan daughter of St. Dorval had wept herself to sleep; but short and broken was her repose, and inanguished was the awakening thought which put it to flight. She arose with the morning dawn from her restless couch, and, throwing open the window of her apartment, flung her tearful glance on the unfolding beauties of awakened creation. "Man alone," sighed she, "sleeps to wake no more! Author of "my being, with whom but yesterday I

" gazed upon this glowing scene; whose " soul sublimated in the contemplation of " those heaven-embosomed mountains, in " what unknown unguessed-at regions of " beatitude does thy spirit now wander; " or dost thou still, with the lingering " fondness of mortal love, hover round " thy child? Behold her tears, and shed " thy sainted pity on her sorrows."

When the body of the count de St. Dorval had been deposited in the tomb where mouldered the remains of his wife, the chevalier de Sorville, in the presence of the young lady de St. Dorval, a notary, and the late count's principal agent, took the seal off his lordship's will, and gave it to the notary to read aloud. The will, which he had seen made only one day before his death, contained but a few words: the whole of his large hereditary and personal estates he bequeathed to his daughter, on the condition of her union with the chevalier de Sorville; but in case that union should not take place, of which he

confessed he saw no human probability, he bequeathed his property to be equally divided between them, appointing the chevalier his sole executor, and guardian to his daughter, until that title should be superseded by a husband's claims. In the codicil several legacies were bequeathed to his servants, a large sum to the convent of St. Dominick, of Picardy in France, and another to the friary in the neighbourhood of Fiora. He also added a few tender and affecting lines to his daughter, expressive of the happiness her future union with the friend of his heart would shed over his last hours of life; and intimating a wish that she would continue for four months after his death at the villa de Fiora; that her residence in Paris should never exceed three; and that she would chiefly reside at the chateau de St. Dorval, conducing to the happiness and comforts of her tenantry and vassals, promoting virtue by her example, and encouraging industry by her countenance and reward.

When the perusal of the count de St. Dorval's last testament was finished, Imogen, no longer able to suppress or conceal her emotion, retired; and the chevalier, not less agitated, though more successful in concealing it, remained for some time with the agent and notary. Affection for the only parent she had ever known had hitherto superseded every sentiment in her mind; and the chevalier's respect for the sacred sorrow of a child, had left her wholly to their private indulgence: but now a sense of the relative situation in which she stood with the chevalier de Sorville rushed on her mind; in the present moment her guardian, the representative of her deceased parent—at a future period the husband and companion of her life.

"Oh! my too-sanguine and deceived "parent," exclaimed Imogen, "why did "thy warm and tender heart ever take the "lead of thy judgment! O de Sorville! "how trying, how delicate, is the situa- "tion in which we mutually stand to each

"other! Thee I must not, dare not reject,
"and me thou wilt not; for thou hast
"been taught to believe that heart is thine,
"which still faintly throbs with the ling-
"ering passion another has inspired; a
"heart which, were it free, could offer
"thee only the homage of its reverence
"and respect. And, though thine own
"beats but with the temperate pulse of
"friendship for thy ward, the hand which
"last inclosed hers in thine, and hallowed
"this union with tears scarcely mortal,
"has riveted our mutual destinies in a
"chain no human power must or can dis-
"solve. Sacred be the wish of my dying
"father's heart, breathed for his child's
"felicity at the shrine of a sainted mother,
"witnessed by attending angels, and re-
"gistered in heaven; for sure that wish,
"fond wish, ascended with thy pure eman-
"cipated spirit to thy kindred skies."

During the remainder of the day Imogen left not her apartment, nor did the chevalier send to request her company

either at dinner or supper; and the next morning, at an early hour, Beatrice delivered the following billet:

To the Lady de St. Dorval.

"A man of the world would felicitate you on your accession to a title so ancient, so noble, as that by which I have the honour to address to you; but I know it will be more grateful to your heart, when, in the honest sincerity of mine, I confess to you, that the hour which made you its possessor, and the great acquisitions attached to it, was one of the most melancholy and most unhappy of my life. To this plain but true avowal, suffer me to add a prayer, that you may prove as worthy of the noble name of St. Dorval, as him from whom you have received it. Inclosed I send you a letter, written by your father to the duchess de Guise, which at a future period will serve as an introduction for you to that amiable and accomplished princess.

Acquainted with the filial virtues of your heart, I have no doubt but the fondest wish of your father will meet your ready acquiescence. I am therefore to consider you as a resident at the villa de Fiora for the six ensuing months; not, however, as a guest, but as a mistress: it has been, madam, from time immemorial, in the possession of your ancestors; it is now yours; but, as the too-fastidious decorum of the world requires the sanction of female guardianship, I have dispatched a courier to hasten my sister's arrival, who will be happy to give you her society, as long as you may wish to possess it: for me, madam, considering myself in no other light but that in which you wish to consider me, I shall never forget the sacred trust reposed in me by my friend; and, as the friend or guardian of his child, her happiness shall always constitute the chief object for which I desire to survive him who bequeathed her to my care. I shall, therefore, fix my residence at Florence during her residence

in Italy, so that distance shall form no barrier, should she, upon any event of her future life, honour me by claiming my advice, or demanding my counsel. Adieu, madam. I am now on the point of setting off for Avignon, where I have written to the stewards of your Provençal and Languedocian estates to meet me, that I may inspect their accounts, and leave every thing in train for your own consideration and future management. I shall also meet my sister there on her way to Italy, whom I hope soon to have the honour of introducing to you. In the parchment, which this letter incloses, I have registered a determination suggested by justice, by equity, by gratitude, and by honour.

I remain, madam, &c. &c.

Your's,

DE SORVILLE.

I, Frederick Augustus, chevalier de Sorville, do, in the presence of the undersigned witness, solemnly renounce any

pretensions, upon any condition or terms whatever, to the property lineal or personal of the late count de St. Dorval, upon which I never had either hereditary, legal, or just, claim.

(Signed) De Sorville.
Le Poyer, Notary.
De ———, Agent.

To the mind of pure and elevated virtue, to the mind filled with enthusiastic homage for all that is great and generous, how dear, how grateful, is a conduct arising from corresponding principles in another! Every feeling of the soul of Imogen dilated as she perused this letter; the delicacy which breathed in every line was too consonant to the refinement of her heart not to awaken its reverence and admiration; and the noble, the romantic generosity with which de Sorville relinquished every interested view, though it did not surprise, gave her that heart-felt satisfaction which we ever feel from an act of greatness of those we love and esteem. That

resignation which, indeed, would have been most grateful to her he had not made, the resignation of herself; but even here she traced the delicate refinement of his always-superior mind, for to voluntarily resign would be tacitly to reject. "But has he not said," she exclaimed, "that he will never "consider himself in any other light than "that in which I wish to consider him?"

Always the sport of feeling and impulse, Imogen, having vainly endeavoured to realize her glowing and grateful emotions on paper, sent Beatrice to the chevalier with her compliments, and she begged to see him before his departure. The intermediate moments were past in restless but not unpleasing agitation; she was still pacing her closet with a hurried step, and indulging the warm flush of her feelings, rather than arranging her scattered ideas, when de Sorville entered. Involved in a confusion the most bewitchingly touching, the tear swimming in her speaking eye, the smile playing round her quivering lip, her

cheek alternately pale and flushed, trembling, agitated, Imogen advanced to meet him, pointed towards the letter, then placed her hands in his, and, turning away her head, wept in silence. The chevalier, scarcely less moved, less agitated, drew her toward a couch, and sat down by her, still holding her hands in his; then, gazing earnestly at her, observing the paleness of her complexion, and the deep mourning of her habiliments, he pressed her hands to his bosom, and mingled his tears with hers.

"I have no friend but you," said Imogen affectingly, "and yet you would leave "me!"

The chevalier shook his head, but seemed either unable or unwilling to answer.

"I thought to have answered your let-"ter," continued Imogen, "but could "not: let these tears speak for me;" and she raised the hand of the chevalier to her lips, and embalmed the kiss she imprest on it with a tear.

"Imogen! Imogen!" exclaimed the

chevalier passionately, "spare me, in mer-
"cy spare me. I cannot, indeed I cannot
"bear this: this is too much;" and he snatched his hand from the grasp of hers.

"Then I must conceal my feelings," said Imogen, "since the dignity of your "elevated virtue disdains their acknow-"ledgment."

"You see my conduct through an ex-"aggerated medium," said the chevalier; "in a cooler moment it will appear in a "less-glowing aspect: but for the present "we will wave the subject."

A pause of a minute ensued, and Imogen, fancying she observed a restless impatience in the countenance and air of the chevalier, timidly said, "I fear, sir, I in-"trude on your time: I had, indeed, much "to say, but you have imposed silence, "and a wish of yours shall henceforth be "unto me as a law."

"Imogen, my sweet friend, I must be-"seech you not to speak thus. My wishes "your law? oh! no; be it the sweet bu-

"siness of my life to anticipate and fulfil "yours."

"At least," said Imogen, "suffer me "to thank you for the happiness I promise "myself in the society of your sister, and "for your considerate kindness in procu- "ring me so estimable a friend; but, when "you speak of the decorum of the world "requiring any other sanction to my resi- "dence here than what your presence "confers, I confess I do not understand "you."

"Thy ignorance, my sweet young "friend, is the wisdom of innocence and "virtue. The heart which knows no "guile, the mind to which simulation is "a stranger, reposes in the consciousness "of its own purity, nor ever suspects that "the degenerate world judges not by facts, "but by appearances."

"At least, my dear chevalier, when your "sister becomes a resident here, I see no "necessity for your removal to Florence."

"Dear chevalier!" repeated de Sorville smiling, with a look half-doubtful, half-delighted.

"Well then," said Imogen blushing, "my dear guardian; by that endearing "sacred title shall I henceforth only ad-"dress you."

The chevalier's looks of elation fled, and he vainly endeavoured to stifle a sigh. Imogen, struck with the sense he might wrench from this declaration, and shocked and surprised by the emotion it awakened, remained silent and confused; but the chevalier was in a moment himself; he arose with dignity and respect, and coldly said: "if you have any commands I can "execute previous to my departure, you "will have the goodness to mention them, "for time presses, and my horses and at-"tendants are in waiting."

"No," said Imogen, grieved to the soul that she had in the hurry of her ideas let fall any expression that could give pain to the best and noblest heart, "I have no

" commands, except that you will return " to me soon."

A sense of her solitary and desolate situation when the chevalier should have left her rushed on her mind, and she burst into tears. The chevalier, deeply affected, took both her hands, and pressed them affectionately, but remained silent.

" I cannot indeed suffer you to depart," continued Imogen earnestly, " until you " promise me you will still consider this " place as your own and *me* as your guest. " You must, indeed you must, give up all " idea of living in Florence; or, if you have " any decided objection to live under the " same roof with me, I will remove with " madame de Rosemont to some villa in the " neighbourhood, and——"

" Objection, Imogen! God of heaven! " if you knew the sacrifice——"

" Consider, you are my only friend on " earth; I have now no father, and I feel " as I did in the convent of St. Dominick

" when I thought myself disowned and re-
" jected by the whole world."

The chevalier turned aside his head, and concealed his face in his cloke; then with a forced smile said: " You forget you are " an heiress; you forget the distinguished " place you are destined to hold in society. " Rank will always secure friends and for-" tune purchase them."

" Indeed!" said Imogen, with a flash of her wonted *naïveté;* " then what is your " price?"

" Imogen! Imogen!" exclaimed the chevalier, " spare me. You overpower, you " overwhelm me; you know not what you " do."

" Promise me then you will continue at " the villa de Fiora on your return from " France. Come, come, you *must* pro-" mise," she added, smiling through her tears, and placing one hand on his shoulder, while, with a look of infatuating supplication, she added: " Can you so soon

" resign your little pupil, yet confess your-
" self so proud of the progress she has made
" under your tuition?"

" I promise any thing, every thing," exclaimed the chevalier, agitated beyond all self-control, " only let me now depart.
" You are my fate, my destiny; but be-
" ware of deceiving me, beware of deceiv-
" ing yourself."

With these words, expressively, emphatically pronounced, he rushed out of the room.

" *Beware of deceiving you, beware of*
" *deceiving myself!*" repeated Imogen three times successively; then, seating herself on the couch, she endeavoured to solve the enigma which lurked in this caution. She recalled to mind all that passed in their late brief but interesting interview, and the purport of the chevalier's departing expression flashed on her apprehension

Her reception of him in that unguarded moment when all her awakened feelings flushed thick about her; when gratitude,

esteem, and admiration for his virtues, his attachment to herself, and his elevated generous conduct, struggled for pre-eminence in her heart, and shed that glow over her manners and conversation which might have left it a doubt to the most penetrating mind whether she was not influenced by a sentiment of a warmer, more tender, and less disinterested, nature than that by which she had been governed; and this circumstance, clashing with the assurance he had received from her father, formed so striking a coincidence, that she now felt herself the unconscious accessary to an illusion it was every way her interest and her wish to dissipate.

"Yes," said she, "the chevalier *must* "believe himself beloved; and the lover "of the superior, the all-intelligent Ro- "salie de Vilette, still enamoured even of "her memory, will marry, from compas- "sion, the thoughtless inexperienced Imo- "gen de St. Dorval."

Her pride, her delicacy, shrunk from the

humiliating conviction. On the impulse of the moment she was on the point of following de Sorville, and unfolding to him every feeling every sentiment of her heart, but at that instant she beheld him gallop down the avenue; and, again restored to the influence of judgment and reason, she felt the indelicacy as well as the inefficacy of the step she was so near adopting; and, restored wholly to herself, she lamented that her principles were rather the effusions of her feelings than the offspring of her reason; and that, in cultivating her talents and her mind, she had neglected that cold dispassionate consideration of *right* and *wrong* which not only in its individual but abstract and invariable effects would have enabled her to lay down a line of conduct, and to form a system of principle which the meteors emanated from the ardor of burning feelings could not dazzle, nor the ebb and flow of passion's impetuous tide could not overwhelm nor efface.

CHAP. XXVI.

Son ame au-dessus des vulgaires,
Dédaignoit de l'amour la conduite ordinaire.
CORNEILLE.

Of friendship's fairest fruits, the fruit most fair
Is virtue, kindling at a rival fire,
And emulously rapid in her race.
YOUNG.

IN the absence of her guardian, Imogen received no visitors, though many visits of condolence and congratulation were paid her by the neighbouring nobility. Her harp lay neglected, her masters were dismissed, her mind was too-deeply affected to apply for relief to books, and the only means she took to dissipate the gloom which solitude and the pensive tone of her mind shed around her was that which humanity, under the influence of her own existing feelings, suggested. She planned

the endowment of an asylum for orphans, and busied herself in seeking for objects worthy to partake of its sanction and benefits. At the expiration of a fortnight the chevalier returned to the villa de Fiora, accompanied by his sister, *that* madame de Rosemont, whose house was to have afforded to the fugitive and unfriended Imogen such a shelter as she was now planning for the reception of others similarly and unfortunately situated. Under the power of emotions arising from the recollection of this circumstance, Imogen rushed to the arms of her once-intended patroness, the friend of Pasiphäe, the sister of de Sorville. The artless unsophisticated child of nature, unrestrained by the world's cold forms of etiquette, shed tears on the bosom of a stranger, nor, in the vivacity of her own ardent feelings, perceived that the heart she pressed to hers beat not with the throb of corresponding emotion. The lady de Rosemont, acquainted with every circumstance of the former and late event-

ful life of Imogen, received her caresses with pleased astonishment, and gazed at her with less interest than curiosity.

The friendship which had subsisted for so many years between the minor canoness of St. Dominick and the lady de Rosemont was a striking proof that love, operating like a magic spell, communicates an illusive property to the nature of every object within its sphere. Madame de Rosemont was *beloved* by Rosalie de Vilette because she was the sister of the man she *adored;* because she could furnish the enamoured, the craving heart of his mistress with a thousand touching anecdotes in her brother's conduct, a thousand amiable traits in his character, that sanctified the love he had inspired. And who that *has* loved under such circumstances has not tolerated the prolixity of dulness, and the "twice-told tale" of prosing stupidity? for to speak of those we love is the magic art to win the soul's delighted attention, even when the judgment and the taste re-

fuse their sanction. Never were two minds organized upon principles more dissimilar than those of de Sorville's sister and his mistress. The strong nervous intellect, the tender glowing heart, the vehement and impassioned disposition of Rosalie, was finely contrasted by the weak but obstinate mind, the phlegmatic temperament, and apathetic character of her friend. Madame de Rosemont in her early life had been in the service of queen Margaret de Valois, the beautiful but deserted wife of Henry the Fourth. She was then a bigoted catholic; she married a hugonot gentleman, and became a rigid protestant. Too indolent to examine into the nature either of her moral or religious faith, she took up her opinion on the recommendation of others, and blindly defended what she had blindly embraced. Rich, independent, and well connected, she was exempt from all the evils of life, and insensible to its best pleasures. Indolence was her enjoyment, and to be surrounded

by those whose dependance on her bounty rendered them unopposing to her opinion and her wish, formed her ultimate idea of society. Cold in her manner, even in her temper, and blameless in her conduct, she glided through life tolerated rather than admired, and was precisely the character on which envy never turned a malignant glance, nor scandal tainted with its pestilential breath. In compliance with her brother's repeated and pressing invitations she arrived at the villa de Fiora without any desire to visit Italy or any wish to remain in France. The chevalier de Sorville loved his sister with the affection of a brother, but not with the *sympathy* of a friend; and though deeply aware of the great, the striking, the *heaven-formed* disparity of the character of his sister and his ward, this very disparity was the strongest inducement to bind them in the bond of close association. Believing that whatever is constantly within the sphere of our perception will communicate some-

thing of its property to our nature, and receive from us an equivalent, he hoped that the methodical manners, the phlegmatic temper, and moderated feelings of his sister, would operate by the influence of constant example on the lively passions, ardent sensibility, and sanguine disposition of Imogen; while from his ward's genius he hoped his sister would steal an emanation to illumine the languor of a mind, perhaps passive and inactive as much from habit as from nature.

Prepared to love, to esteem, to admire, the sister of de Sorville, the friend of Pasiphäe,—one week dissipated the illusion of expectation, and, a natural mental physiognomist, the mind and character of madame de Rosemont stood unveiled to the disappointed eye of Imogen. Restrained by her presence, she rather interrupted the mild and pensive enjoyments of solitude than bestowed the pleasure of society, and Imogen vainly endeavoured to converse with one between whom and her-

self there existed no reciprocity of sentiment, no sympathy of feeling, no community of idea. Such was the nature of her connexion with the sister, while with the brother her situation hourly became more delicate, more awkward, and more distressing. The chevalier seemed to have given up all thought of residing at Florence, and to have laid aside with the intention of a too-fastidious prudence the rigid manners and dictatorial air which had accompanied it. Even the parental familiarity with which he had formerly treated his pupil, with which he reproved her errors or applauded her perfections, had now given way to a delicate but obvious reserve, a polite and assiduous attention, which, if it wore not the air of love or gallantry, possessed nothing of the aspect of indifference.

Imogen, still impressed with the sentiments which arose from her interview with de Sorville, met him on his return from France with blushing confusion; and,

struck with the change in his air and manner, believed her suspicions were founded in fact, and that the chevalier, supposing himself beloved, was endeavouring to return the passion he had awakened.

New to every species of dissimulation, Imogen could not conceal the repugnance, the uneasiness, this idea gave birth to; and though she had never formed a thought of frustrating the intentions of her father by refusing the hand of his friend should he offer it, she was yet acting unconsciously upon a principle which would eventually put an insuperable bar to every hope of a union between herself and the chevalier.

Not only from impulse but from premeditation she now avoided the presence of one whose society had once been so necessary to her happiness. If he addressed her, her answers were brief and cold; if he found her alone she arose, and, under some feigned pretence, left the apartment; if he solicited her to continue her English and Italian studies, she pleaded engagements

with her professional masters (who were now all re-called ;) and when not engaged with madame de Rosemont, remained shut up for hours in her own apartment with her books and her harp. The change in the chevalier's conduct at last left her no plea for the apparent singularity of her own, for reserve and distance became its only character. They now seldom met but at meals, and never exchanged words but in general conversation with madame de Rosemont and the few and select visitors who enlarged the family circle of the villa.

A month had elapsed since the chevalier had returned to the villa de Fiora, when one morning, as Imogen was engaged with her music-master, he entered the apartment and took up a book, while Imogen continued her lesson on the harp. In a short time the professor, with many flattering encomiums on her musical progress, withdrew. Confused, yet anxious to appear collected, Imogen modulated on the

strings of the instrument, and endeavoured to hum the air she had been practising, but her finger was unsteady and her voice tremulous. The chevalier laid down the book, gazed on her for a moment in silence, then, rising and seating himself by her, he gently drew her hands from the harp, and with a faint smile said: "Will "you so far overcome repugnance as to "honour me with a few minutes' confer- "ence? It may perhaps save you some "future hours of unfounded misery, and "may conduce to the termination of those "I have already endured."

Unable to reply, yet touched to the heart by the melancholy, the tenderness, with which these few words were pronounced, Imogen bowed her head in acquiescence to his request. A pause of considerable and distressing length ensued: the soul of de Sorville seemed to "fall into itself;" then, after pacing the room for a minute, he again seated himself by Imogen and began:

"Twenty years back I entered life with

" a heart as warm, feelings as irritable, af-
" fections as glowing, and ideas as chime-
" rical in their expectations, as *you* now
" possess. Young, ardent, unguarded, with-
" out a friend to direct, a guardian to save
" me, I was thrown upon the world; I was
" thrown among the vicious, the crafty, the
" unprincipled, and the designing. My
" experience was briefly but dreadfully
" bought; my affections became the sport
" of the cunning, my feelings the scorn of
" the phlegmatic, and my credulity the
" victim of the designing. Heaven, in
" bestowing on me such dangerous gifts,
" gave equilibrium to the balance in en-
" dowing me with a strong mind; that
" was my saviour from perdition. Ruined
" by the wiles of a mercenary passion, be-
" trayed by friends, and deceived by as-
" sociates, with my little wreck of fortune
" and of virtue, at the age of two-and-
" twenty I fled from the world to the
" dear shades of my youth and my happi-
" ness. At this period a circumstance

" took place, which shed the predominant
" hue on all the lights and shades of my
" after life. I loved—for the first time I
" loved. The object of my passion was not
" only beautiful and virtuous; she was a
" woman of *mind*, of *genius*—she was Ro-
" salie de Vilette, the minor canoness of
" St. Dominick. Brought up in all the
" rigid bigotries of superstition, the fire of
" her soul shed a light upon the gloomy
" page of fanaticism, and discovered its
" characters traced in blood. From the
" lip of love I imbibed the essence of re-
" ligion; and the object of my earthly
" homage, like a seraph directing an
" emancipated spirit in its flight to heaven,
" led me to the bosom of my heavenly
" Father by the luminous path of truth.
" Mild was the beam that illumined my
" path, and soothing the sounds that lured
" me on the way. Hope and faith glanced
" on my uplifted eye, and peace, charity,
" and love, breathed on my ear. Such
" was the simple but deep-laid system of

" my orthodoxy. The sequel of my noble,
" my pure, but unfortunate, love you are
" acquainted with. The brother, the fa-
" ther, of Rosalie, bigoted, cruel, and
" ambitious, deemed the illumination of
" her mind the deceptive glare of heresy;
" and, to enrich the male branch of the
" family, tore her from the bosom they
" had stabbed in a moment of fanatic
" frenzy, and buried her in a convent for
" life.

" For ten years passion survived hope,
" possibility, and reason; then the varia-
" bility of all human affections, when de-
" serted by their object, began to prevail;
" and the ardor of love moderated into
" a tender, melancholy, and grateful, re-
" collection of that sentiment which once
" filled and occupied my whole soul.—
" Without a family, without connections,
" without a home, without plan or object
" in view, I pursued a life wandering and
" unsettled. Dreading the world, I con-
" cealed from its ridicule the still ardent

"feelings of my soul beneath an assumed "phlegmatic character. Loving mankind "with a more than brotherly affection, I "assisted it to the best of my moderate "abilities, while I carefully concealed the "tender, the warm affections which "prompted my endeavours."

Here the chevalier paused; then, after a moment's silence, continued:

"He who once in his life has acknow-"ledged the power of woman's *mind*, of "woman's *genius*, superior even to her "personal attraction; who has found in "the object of his love the idol of his re-"verence, his esteem, his admiration, and "who loses this object, can only judge "how difficult it is to teach the heart to "offer its homage at the shrine of inferior "excellence. When the glowing affec-"tions of my heart panted for an object "to engross their tender sensibilities, I "said, 'When thou shalt again find one "who possesses the virtue, the mind, the "genius, and the graces, of the idol of

" thy first homage, then shalt thou love.'
" Many a year fled on, but no sentiment
" succeeded the tender recollection of Ro-
" salie de Vilette ; yet the hour came when
" I said, ' Now thou mayst love, for now
" thou hast found another Rosalie.' "

The chevalier paused; the sanguine beam of passion illumined his eye, the rich colouring of vehement emotion glowed on his cheek; and, throwing himself at the feet of Imogen, he exclaimed: " O
" thou! for whom it was reserved to awa-
" ken the long-stilled pulse of love in a
" heart long dead to passion's melting
" influence; whose innocence and love-
" liness warmed admiration into tender-
" ness, and whose mind and genius ele-
" vated tenderness to esteem, to love;
" pupil of my care, sister of my heart,
" companion of my mind, daughter of St.
" Dorval, by all these endearing claims I
" conjure thee to hear in patience, and in
" pity to forgive. 'Twas not thy form's
" perfection, thy youth's fresh bloom, thy

"person's 'witching graces, that alone
"could have touched a heart like mine.
"No, oh no! it was the emanation of
"heaven that shone in thy soul; it was thy
"mind's intelligence, thy heart's good-
"ness: even thy errors were dear to me,
"for they sprang from thy virtues, and
"were such as the world only could ren-
"der dangerous to their possessor.

"Long was the secret of my passion
"concealed even from myself; and, when
"discovered, great and dreadful were the
"struggles with which I endeavoured to
"suppress it. The disparity of our years
"seemed a barrier nature herself had
"drawn between us. But, O Imogen!
"when the capability of receiving happi-
"ness survives the power of awakening
"it; when sorrow has dimmed the eye's
"bright lustre, while the soul's fire is yet
"unextinguished; when the hand of time
"has prematurely faded the form, and the
"heart still continues to bloom; con-
"sciously rich in our own internal trea

" sure, we see not that others behold only
" the consumption of our external posses-
" sions, while that which passeth shew re-
" mains unprized, because unknown. Feel-
" ing profoundly the influence and power
" of reason, heaven's best gift, I did not
" despair of conquering by its aid what I
" could not but deem a weakness. How
" far I *did*, or how far I *might* have suc-
" ceeded, 'tis now vain to say; but in the
" moment when I first began to triumph
" over myself, *your father, my friend*, my
" only friend, conjured me to become the
" husband of his daughter, by that love I
" had awakened in her youthful bosom. O
" Imogen! that was a moment on which
" I *must* not, dare not dwell. Suffice it
" to say, I referred him wholly to you,
" then rushed from the villa under pre-
" tence of visiting Florence; but, in the
" indulgence of my turbulent emotions, I
" continued to wander amidst the woods
" which skirt the Arno, until your servant
" delivered me your letter. Oh! the

" emotion with which that letter was re-
" ceived. But alas! it was not the finger
" of love that traced its lines, but the
" hand of filial sorrow recording the dic-
" tates of parental dissolution. I flew to
" share, to *more* than share, your woes;
" and the first moment of our interview
" convinced me the father's love for his
" friend had seen the daughter's incli-
" nation through its own partial medium.
" Imogen, the look of repugnance with
" which you turned from me is still pre-
" sent to my view. Your air, your man-
" ner, your countenance, during the pe-
" rusal of the count's will, your total se-
" clusion from the presence of his friend,
" all spoke a language my heart under-
" stood. But, unconsciously-delusive girl,
" the reception which my letter procured
" me, those blandishments which thy ten-
" der affliction seemed to heighten, the
" melting glance of those tearful eyes, the
" flattering entreaties of those persuasive
" lips, the fond pressure of that caressing

" hand!—You conjured me not to aban-
" don you, you clung to me as your only
" friend. Imogen! Imogen! who would
" not have been deceived as I was? But
" sweet and transient was the illusion. I
" complied with thy dangerous request; I
" again became an inmate of the dwelling
" you inhabited. I trembled, yet I hoped;
" but I soon ceased to tremble or to hope.
" Certainty succeeded to suspense, and
" in the eye of her I loved I read nothing
" but aversion, and cold repugnance
" breathed only in the accents of her for
" whose happiness I would have immo-
" lated my own, and triumphed in the
" sacrifice."

From the humble attitude in which the emotion, amazement, the wrapt attention, the lively interest, and warm admiration of the all awakened, but now nearly overpowered, Imogen had suffered him to remain, the chevalier de Sorville now arose. A majestic dignity succeeded to the impassioned tenderness of his air, his eyes

flashed fire, the mild expansion of his brow was contracted into the proud frown of conscious self-command, and with a voice no longer tremulous, he exclaimed: "So "much for the weakness of human na- "ture; *now* for its strength."

Then taking the hand of Imogen he held it firmly, and, looking fully but without emotion, said: "This is the firm grasp "of friendship, lady, not the trembling "glowing fold of love. From this mo- "ment you have no longer an affianced "husband, I have no longer an affianced "bride. Thus for ever do I resign that "hand clapsed in mine by that of thy "dying father; thus do I give back that "faith I believed silently interchanged "with mine at the shrine of thy sainted "mother. The golden hopes my heart "so fondly nourished, the years of bright "felicity my fancy sketched, all, all, for "ever are now resigned. For that heart, "voluntarily withdrawn, mine shall never "again solicit; that love, so decidedly re-

" fused, shall never again obtrude its im-
" portunities. You are free, free as air,
" lady; but for me, I am bound for life
" to thy service. Oh! thou child of his
" soul who was dearer to my heart than
" the vital drops that visit it, thou whom
" at the shrine of departed excellence I
" vowed to honour, to guard, to protect;
" daughter of St. Dorval! was I then so
" little known to thee, that thou couldst
" imagine for my own selfish gratification
" I would sacrifice thy future peace and
" happiness? No: so may I be adjudged
" hereafter, so may I be doomed to misery
" eternal or eternal bliss, as I forward or
" neglect the promotion of thy felicity.
" Thus again in the face of heaven I
" swear to live for thy happiness alone,
" though my heart-strings break in the
" endeavour to effect it; for were it possi-
" ble that one emotion of love could sur-
" vive the efforts of reason, even in the
" warmest paroxysm of passion at the
" altar's foot, this hand should bestow

" you on the object of thy election, nor my
" soul deem that a sacrifice which made you
" happy. From this moment then behold
" not in me the betrothed lover, the af-
" fianced husband, but the watchful guar-
" dian, the tender parent, the unalterable
" friend. *Thy* father, *my* friend, meant
" to secure thy felicity; and his sainted
" spirit, perhaps, at this moment hovers
" round us, and sheds its benign approval
' on the effort I make to promote it,
" though by different means than those his
" wishes sketched."

The chevalier ceased to speak. The grandeur, the dignity of virtue involved his air and person, yet so tempered with affection, so moderated by tenderness, that it was obvious the feelings of the man and the rigid fortitude of the philosopher, the weakness of the heart and the energy of reason, were still at variance.

The mind which is truly great, though in the interval of passion, of apathy, or of indolence, it may relinquish the exertion

of its faculties, or give relaxation to its powers, yet under the pressure of exigency it will always rouze itself from its transient inanity, and by the force of great example it will awaken to efforts of kindred greatness. Like the passive pendulum, which but faintly vibrates until its extreme point of oscillation, touched by another's quicker movement, receives and imparts reciprocal and rapid motion; Imogen, whose mind had hitherto been wholly absorbed in her feelings, and who had given herself up wholly to their influence, now, called on by the power of virtue's sacred emulation, awakened to every effort of intellectual greatness of which her mind was susceptible:

"Not touch'd but wrapt, not waken'd but inspir'd."

The impression of de Sorville's virtue, his magnanimity, his refined and almost romantic generosity, still warm on her soul, her fancy still glowing with the idea of his excellence, her heart swelling with

gratitude for his goodness towards herself; Imogen, the virtuous but always impulsive, always ardent, Imogen, looking up to her friend as to a being of superior order, fell at *his* feet who but a moment before had dropped in humble supplication at *hers*, and in silence lifted her melting eyes to his. De Sorville, amazed, overwhelmed, endeavoured to raise her.

"No," said Imogen firmly; "if outward forms can indicate the humility of "the inward thought, here will I remain "until I sue for that forgiveness I hope, "yet I am not worthy to obtain."

"Imogen!" exclaimed the chevalier in great emotion, and forcibly raising her in his arms, "what it is you mean?"

"That I confess myself unworthy of "your friendship, unworthy of your exalted goodness, and yet that I dared to "hope——"

"What? speak Imogen!"

"That the day *shall* come when friendship shall be the least tie that shall "unite us."

"Imogen!"

"O sir!" she exclaimed with energy and pathos, "could you see into my heart "you would rather pity than condemn, "you would behold it adoring that virtue "it cannot reach, you would behold its "perpetual vibration between the ardor "of its feelings and the efforts of its rea- "son. The child of enthusiasm, borne "away by impulse, it is from extraordi- "nary occasion only I can borrow extra- "ordinary exertion; but this heart is not "destitute of virtue, and therefore not "wholly unworthy of your care. Be thou "then, O most amiable of men! its "gardian, for to thy care from this mo- "ment I consign it. Supported by thy "firm and equable mind, I will endeavour "to trace thy steps, and shine with a beam "borrowed from thy light; but let the "goal of my endeavours be that reward "which the wishes of my dying father "promised. Oh! turn not then from my "supplication. I know the great dispa-

"rity between us—you all mind, I all "heart; you all reason, I all feeling; you "all thought, I all sensation; you prac- "tising virtue, and I but loving it. Suffer "me then to love it most in him who is "its best representative."

"Imogen! Imogen!" interrupted de Sorville in violent agitation, "cease, in "mercy cease. You know not what you "do; your feelings are warmed; this is "but the dream of your imagination."

"No, sir," said Imogen with dignity: "I am not always the visionary you sup- "pose; and, though I shine not with your "steady light, I too have my moments of "lumination. No, it is now I cease to "dream; 'tis now I am awakened from "the illusion of my feelings, my passions, "and my enthusiasm. Converted from "the fanaticism of the heart to the pure "faith of affection and reason by your ex- "ample, oh! then receive to your bosom "the convert you have made."

Wholly overcome, the chevalier dropped

in silence at her feet; then taking both her hands in his, he solemnly demanded: "Imogen, does thy heart dictate this re-" quest?"

"So may I be happy in this world and "the next as it does!" fervently replied Imogen.

"The the prayers of thy father have "ascended to heaven, and thou art mine. "Receive into thy hands the destinies of "our loves, for from this moment I con-"sign them wholly to thee. It is enough "that thou wilt yet be mine. For thee, and "for thy wishes or thy delicacy, be it re-"served to accelerate or retard the bliss-"ful period."

CHAP. XXVII.

L'amour n'a bien souvent qu'un douceur trompeuse;
Mais vivre indifferente, est-ce une vie heureuse?

CORNEILLE.

Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy?

SHAKESPEARE.

TO wrest from her bosom its last fluttering weakness, to extinguish the last lingering spark of an almost-expired passion, and to pursue with an undeviating step that illumined path of virtue and reason she had so boldly entered, was now all that remained for the *novice of St. Dominick* to effect. She had vanquished a repugnance rather childish than natural, rather capricious than reasonable; and she had adopted that medium of rational happiness which vibrates between the delirium of ecstatic

felicity and the sobriety of placid indifference. Yet to the heart whose pulse is set by nature to the quick throb of rapture's palpitation, whose nerves are organised to the thrill of wildest bliss, how difficult to teach the lesson of prudent moderation in its enjoyments! Had not the ambition, the emulation of the always proud and emulative Imogen stimulated her to the endeavour, she had drooped in the utter impossibility of the effort. While often, too often, in despite of reason and of prudence, the faded visions of former joys rose on the eye of recollection, dressed in the faint but captivating hues of their primæval glow, the fairy ecstacies of fancy played in the lingering beam of an awed imagination, and passion's warm tide rushed over the heart beyond that barrier of feeling reason had erected for its security.

The chevalier de Sorville had placed the destiny of his love in the hands of its object, and Imogen had fixed the expiration

of her mourning for her father as the period when her probation should expire, and when (the weak propensities of her heart subdued) she should unite herself for life to the wisest, the most amiable and virtuous of men. Meantime the conduct of de Sorville towards his ward held the happiest medium between the tenderness of love and the sobriety of friendship; the familiar affection of the brother and the never-slumbering care of the guardian. Slow to reprove, but slower to flatter, he pointed out her errors with freedom, while he acknowledged her excellencies with delight. He continued his superintendance of her studies and accomplishments with an ardor that marked the charm which lurked in the task; and, without fatiguing her by obvious assiduity, was always engaged in those graceful little attentions which ever interest a sensible heart, if they do not win it. The effects which his good sense had hoped to produce by associating his sister with his ward had by no means

answered his expectation. Imogen, in those hours which the etiquette of their domestic economy obliged her to pass in the society of madame de Rosemont, treated her apathetic guest with that genuine politeness which springs from the goodness of the heart, and that bewitching sweetness of manner which stole its magic from the native excellence of her disposition and elegance of her mind; but further than this she never sought and seldom enjoyed her society. That sympathy which forms the broad imperishable basis of every social connection was denied them; and Imogen, who adhered to extremes as much as did madame de Rosemont to the neutral road of mediocrity, either clinging to an object with idolatrous fondness or recoiling in the coldest repugnance, regretted she could not force herself to tolerate the phlegmatic character of madame de Rosemont, or find a place in the wide circle of her affections for the sister of de Sorville, the friend of Pasiphäe.

Four months flew on with an even but not a rapid pace. The chevalier de Sorville, confiding in the voluntarily-offered affections of his ward, beholding himself unrivaled in her admiration, her esteem, seldom elated by the thrill of temporary transport, and never pursued by the nausea of transient satiety, became daily more enamoured of a solitude which encircled within its boundaries all that was most precious to his soul, and which bestowed those soft and sober pleasures so consonant to the mild and pensive gravity of his character. The absence of signor Dolce and a few other neighbouring gentry, with the death of the diocesan bishop, and the too-licentious mode of living of many of the occupants of the surrounding villas, reduced the society of the villa de Fiora almost to its own domestic circle. Madame de Rosemont beheld its contraction with indifference, the chevalier de Sorville with pleasure. Imogen neither with indiffer-

enee nor pleasure. Hitherto she had seen, she had known nothing of the world, either from experience or report. Taste, sentiment, or science, always furnished the leading topic of conversation at the villa de Fiora, and in the convent of St. Dominick all had been professedly

"The world forgetting, by the world forgot."

And now that those subjects on which her heart loved to dwell were prohibited its contemplation by prudence, the world became the fancy of her fancy's bright but visionary speculation. Her lively imagination had shed its brightest glow over its fairy scenes of fancied pleasure, and her genius delighted to people them with

"Such gay creatures of the elements
"As in the colours of a rainbow live."

Opposed to this bright but chimerical picture, the sober unvaried tranquillity of her private and uninteresting life stole on her

languid mind. "The same to-day, to-"morrow, and for ever," time crept on with a slow and even pace, but little consonant to the velocity of her quick changing sensations, the variety of her "thick-"coming fancies," or the animation and eccentricity of her ideas. Even the stream of pleasure she drew from the rich source of intellect had now in some degree lost its spirit, and convinced her that, in the frailty of our present natures, *mind* alone, however abundant its treasures, is not all sufficient to the completion of mundane felicity; while her extraordinary, her versatile, her brilliant talents, arrived to their *acme* of perfection, were denied the reward the unwearied industry and perseverance with which they were cultivated demanded. For de Sorville alone she seemed to exist, with him only she conversed, for him her musical genius exerted its delightful powers, for him her paintings were executed; while her proud ambition called for the stimulus of a less-contracted

applause, and the social principle which smiled eternally in her heart languished to extend its influence in a wider sphere.

Another month was added to the four already elapsed, when a relation of madame de Rosemont became a visitant at the villa by her invitation. The stranger was a young and lively Neapolitan, the widow of a Tuscan nobleman, and a woman of considerable fashion and influence in Florence. From her first introduction the marchesè de Mariotti conceived a violent predilection for the young and original lady de St. Dorval, consonant to the volatility of her character and the warmth and facility of her inclinations, which were seldom actuated but by the caprice of the moment, while Imogen, in the sympathy of youth and reciprocal vivacity, was charmed with her society and fascinated with her manners, which were truly Italian. At the expiration of a month she was to return to Florence, but refused to leave the villa unaccompanied by her new favourite.

In her lively way she rallied the chevalier on his spirit of monopoly, urged the danger of concealing his ward from the world, from the effects such prohibition might produce when she became her own mistress; talked of the necessity of introducing a woman of her rank at the Florentine court before she left Italy; and, determined on carrying her point, teazed, coaxed, rallied, and threatened, by turns. The steady and invariable mind of the chevalier de Sorville would have been proof against all the sophistry of the marchese's entreaties and arguments; but he could not withstand the melting glance of entreaty that swam in the soft eyes of his ward; he could not resist the sweet smile of supplication that played on her lip, nor the fire that illumined her fine countenance when the world and its brilliant pleasures became the theme of the signora Mariotti's fascinating eloquence. And the sanguine, ardent, unsophisticated, lady de St. Dorval was at last suffered to depart

with the gay, fashionable, and volatile, marchese de Mariotti.

The court of Florence was at that period the most polished and elegant in Europe; the lustre of the Medicean genius still shed its lingering beams from the ducal throne of Tuscany; the muses still loved to loiter over the natural place of their favourite Lorenzo, and the arts still sought and found protection and reward in the taste and magnificence of his descendants. The drama, even yet in its infancy in England and France, had arrived to a considerable degree of perfection in Italy, from the early revival of the Greek theatre by the cardinal Babrino, the archbishop of Trissino, and the accomplished Leo the Xth: and Imogen, on the evening of her arrival at Florence, had the pleasure of being present at the representation of one of Ariosto's plays with the brilliant accompaniments of scenic decoration, whose sentiments and fanciful flights had so often charmed her in the closet without "the

"foreign aid of art." The combined charms of music and poetry, aided by the exertion of dramatic excellence; the dazzling effect of brilliant illumination; the splendor and elegance of the company; with the pleasure, the gaiety that reigned on every side, possessed a nameless enchantment which at once enraptured the senses, awakened the imagination, and delighted the mind of the novice of St. Dominick even to delirium. The marchioness and her *protégée* had occupied a private box at the theatre, and gone *incog.*; but the next day the rank and fortune of her illustrious guest were blazoned through every distinguished circle in Florence, and her conversazioni that evening was at once the most splendid and numerous the Palazzo de Mariotti had ever witnessed. Imogen, still in the interesting habiliments of filial grief, the "customary suit of solemn "black," shrunk from the gaze of curiosity she elicited from every eye; while the timidity, the reserve of her manner, the

effect of habitual seclusion, not of natural disposition, dampt the admiration her air and person inspired. But as the first flush of wonder, of novelty subsided; as ambition wakened by example, and genius expanded by the influence of sympathy, Imogen's modest distrust of herself vanished by the comparative estimate she formed of her own qualifications with the talents of those by whom she was surrounded. She beheld the wreath which should entwine the brow of genius frequently adjudged to tasteful mediocrity, and the richest incense of applause offered at the shrine of moderate but fashionable capability.

It was then emulation chased the last lingering shadow of diffidence; and genius, flinging aside the veil which modesty and reserve had thrown over it, appeared in all its cloudless lustre, bright, splendid, and luminous. The variety of those talents which education had so highly cultivated; that elegant store of information which an early thirst for study had accumulated;

that original *naïveté* of manner which naturally united the polish of a court to the piquant wildness of simple rusticity; with the youth, the beauty, and rank, of their singular possessor, rendered the lady de St. Dorval the cynosure of fashionable admiration, and the popular wonder of the day.

Animated by applause, stimulated by success, her genius seemed almost to rise above itself: the happiest, the most original poetic flights soon obtained her a distinguished rank among the first *improvisatori* of fashion. The brilliancy of her repartees, and the playful vein of her frolic humour; an early initiation into the attic society of the *humoristi*, and her exquisite musical skill, with the addition of her extraordinary vocal powers, and her chaste and correct taste in painting and sculpture, obtained her the flattering title of the "Muse of the Arno." Gallantry pursued her every where with its homage; Love offered its tributary sighs at the shrine of her charms; and Envy, ever hovering near

her, breathed its tainted breath on the rose of triumph which twined its tendrils round her brow, and dimmed the lustre of its blush ere it had matured to its richest glow.

The marchese, whose friendship for her charming guest expired in the very moment that her evident superiority gave birth to jealousy, endeavoured to lessen the train of her followers, by publishing her connection with the chevalier, with the circumstance of the greater part of her fortune devolving to him in case their union did not take place. This anecdote, which she had learnt from madame de Rosemont, and which indeed was pretty generally known, had not produced altogether the effect desired by the fair disseminator: for, if serious passion retired in despair, gallantry became more ardent in the pursuit of its object; and the adulatory train of Imogen hourly increased in proportion as that of the marchese diminished.

Delighted, dazzled, overwhelmed, from this dream of enchantment Imogen was

awakened by the unexpected arrival of the chevalier de Sorville, who, at the expiration of three weeks, came to reclaim his precious trust, and lead her from the haunts of flattery, pleasure, and dissipation, to scenes of peaceful and virtuous tranquillity. The affectionate welcome with which Imogen flew to receive her amiable guardian (for in this light only did she now consider him, while every thought of future connection was voluntarily banished) was clouded by her extreme reluctance to quit the fairy scene where joys, but scarce conceived before, had shed their brightest spells around her.

But the chevalier, in a tone of decision he had not hitherto adopted, urged her return, and the marchese did not press her stay. Imogen, with a heart that still fluttered round the beam of its attraction, bid adieu to the refined, the elegant, and dissipated, circles of Florence, where those propensities to every species of elegant pleasure which had so long lain dormant in

her heart had first awakened into gay existence.

They proceeded on their little journey in mutual silence and reserve. The chevalier demanded an account of the scenes and the society Imogen had mingled in; and Imogen, delighted to dwell in recollection on those pleasures whose actual existence had bestowed such poignant gratification, entered on the detail with animated eloquence, and described the nature of her emotions under the influence of novelty, wonder, and delight, with energy and enthusiasm. The chevalier's attention was silent and uninterrupted, and his only comment a sigh.

Imogen returned to the villa de Fiora with very different ideas from those with which she had left it: retirement for the first time seemed to her to contradict the purposes of nature; and what before appeared seclusion now wore the aspect of a frightful solitude. The blessings of society for the first time seemed understood by her, and genius and talent only inesti-

mable, as they contributed to its enjoyment, and received its applause.

While the insinuating tones of adulation still murmured their dangerous plaudits in her ear, the coolly-pronounced approbation of her guardian scarcely reached its attention: while the wonder of an admiring multitude still gratified her ambition, the sensible intercourse of friendship no longer interested her mind: while still fascinated by the bewitching softness of the Florentine beauties, their tender persuasive air and brilliant accomplishments, the cold, the phlegmatic character and uninteresting manners of madame de Rosemont changed the former toleration once granted them into absolute repugnance. A month had now elapsed beyond the period allotted by her father for her residence at the villa de Fiora, and Imogen beheld that month elapse and another commence with impatience and disappointment. To those who have once

felt the "thrilling melody of sweet renown," who are conscious of wasting those talents, that genius, in obscurity which are calculated to delight and to instruct the world, and to obtain for their possessor that enviable distinction which fame bestows, seclusion and solitude appear the worst of evils, and the envy and persecution which superior merit ever elicits preferable to pursuing unknown and undistinguished "the noiseless tenor of their way."

The unoccupied heart of Imogen left ample scope to the ambition of her mind to exert its influence; and she who was born to feel and to inspire the best, the most exalted, of all human passions, yet who dared not love where she would, and could not love where she ought, pursued the gratification of her vanity when that of the affections was denied her, and sighed for the homage of a world which she would still have sacrificed for the empire of a kindred heart. Preyed on by

apathy, by discontent, yet too timid to hint the source of her uneasiness to her guardian; her vivacity fled, her attention to her studies slackened, her conversation was languid, and her manner reserved.

One evening as she worked in silence, interrupted only her own sighs, at the side of the usually-silent madame de Rosemont, a laquais delivered a message from the chevalier de Sorville, requesting her presence in the study. Imogen threw by her work, and, vibrating between doubt and hope, apprehension and curiosity, went to her guardian. She found him writing, and surrounded by papers, parchments, and all the insignia of business. He rose with a tender smile to receive her, and, having led her to a seat by himself, exclaimed, "You, who, I trust, are now "acquainted with my heart, who govern its "every movement, cannot be unconscious "that the society of my charming ward, "my interesting pupil, constitutes its

"greatest though perhaps not its safest "blessing; you therefore will not con- "strue what I am about to mention, into "a language unfavourable to my affection "or my taste, or a violation of the laws "of hospitality, if I propose to you your "immediate removal from the villa de "Fiora."

"Whatever you propose, sir," said Imogen, with a cheek coloured with surprise and pleasure, "must meet my approbation."

"In this instance, at least," said the chevalier pointedly, "it will do more, it "will meet your long-cherished ardent "wishes."

The colouring of pleasure faded on the cheek of Imogen, and she stammered out, "I hope, sir, you do not believe, do not "think, that ——"

"O Imogen!" interrupted de Sorville impressively, "thy feelings, as yet unprac- "tised to the world's mechanical impulse, "wear no veil; and the wishes of thy

" heart, thy imagination, swim in thy eyes
" and beam in thy countenance, even
" when thy lips deny them existence, and
" thou fanciest they are concealed from
" every observation. It was a false deli-
" cacy that prevented your acknowledg-
" ing them to your friend, and it was sel-
" fishness in him that prevented his anti-
" cipating their utterance. I have long
" perceived that satiety hung upon thy
" life's too tranquil round, and that those
" whom you know, and with whom you
" were associated, could confer no happi-
" ness commensurate with that you ex-
" pect to enjoy with those whom you did
" not know. But closely indeed is the
" selfish principle interwoven with our na-
" tures, when it can interfere with my af-
" fection for thee; for a miser, a very
" miser, of the happiness your society
" confers, I dared not, could not propose
" to relinquish my treasure, until the vow
" so solemnly made recurred to my me-
" mory, that I would live only for your
" felicity."

"And will a change of scene, my dear "friend," exclaimed Imogen with vivacity and tenderness, "produce a change "of sentiment? Oh, no! In solitude or "in society, now and ever, my friend, my "guardian, my preceptor, my guide, it is "in the world your presence will be most "requisite to my happiness and safety; it "is in the world I shall most need your "care, your guardianship, and advice."

The chevalier raised the hand presented to him to his lips, saying, "And what "does my sweet Imogen mean by that "oft-mistaken term the *world*?"

"Why," said Imogen, playfully returning the smile, "shall we not go to "Paris from hence?"

"To Paris!" repeated de Sorville, in a tone of disappointment. "I did hope "your first residence, in quitting this "peaceful solitude, would have been at the "seat of your ancestors."

"I hoped so too," replied she; "and "had I left Tuscany two months back it

" should have been. But the season is
" now so far advanced; and several French
" gentlemen, whom I met at Florence, as-
" sured me this winter was expected to be
" the most brilliant Paris ever witnessed;
" and the king himself, it is supposed,
" will raise the standard of elegant and
" refined pleasure, and——"

" And you, Imogen, you pant to enlist
" beneath its banners, and to become its
" most ardent votarist."

" A votarist, perhaps, sir, but not a
" fanatic, I hope," returned Imogen.

" O Imogen, *you* were not born to
" enjoy with moderation; your pleasures
" and your woes will ever rise even be-
" yond the scale of moderate concep-
" tion; and long and trying is the pro-
" bation thou wilt have to endure, ere
" that keen susceptibility to every exist-
" ing impression, that ardor of expecta-
" tion, that energy of feeling, shall sub-
" side, which ever render their possessor
" the prey of sanguine expectation and

"consequent disappointment. But let "me not by ill-timed caution damp the "lustre of hope and imagination. Alas! "too soon will they fade in the influence "of experience. Although I would al- "ways wish you to be slow to decide, I "would have you prompt to execute.— "We have now determined on leaving "Italy. Let the day of our departure "be fixed by yourself. I shall dispatch "a courier to-morrow for France, in "order to prepare your Parisian agent, "and the *maître d'hotel* at the hotel "St. Dorval, for your arrival. The "same courier will carry letters to your "Languedocian and Provençal stewards, "to require their attendance at Avig- "non, that you may meet them on the "way, and that you may yourself look "over and examine their accounts, and "receive your rents, since your journey "to and residence in Paris will be attend- "ed with a considerable expense: be- "sides, you will shortly be of age, and

"it will be requisite you should form an "establishment suitable to the rank and "possessions of the last noble descendant "of the illustrious house of St. Dorval. "Your residence will of course be at the "hotel de St. Dorval, one of the most no- "ble though most ancient in Paris.— "Your father's letter to the princess de "Guise will procure you the sanction and "countenance of one of the first women "in France, and an introduction into the "first circles. My sister will accompany "you to France, and reside during your "stay at Paris at her own hotel, which is "in the neighbourhood of yours, so that "her vicinity to you will still afford you "her matronly sanction. For myself, I "shall take up my residence in the house "of a friend until——"

The chevalier abruptly paused and changed colour.

"Until you legally become the master "of mine," mentally added Imogen, from

whose cheek and eye the glow of animation fled.

"*Until,*" continued de Sorville, "*you* "may please to leave Paris for the shades "of the chateau de St. Dorval."

Imogen's spirits rallied, her gratified heart again sent a pleasurable blush to her cheek, and all within her mind was the delightful flurry of hope and expectation. The chevalier now arose, and taking her hand, said, "I have now only to add, "that I request you will draw on me for "any sums you may have occasion for "previous to your departure. You mentioned a wish to purchase some paintings and statues belonging to the house "of a deceased nobleman, celebrated for "his taste at Florence in these arts."

"Yes," said Imogen delightedly, "I "will buy them all. I saw too some "beautiful Etruscan vases and lamps, "some fine antique stands and tripods, "some Venetian mirrors and marble slabs, "which are to be disposed of, and were

"pointed out to me by some *cognoscenti* "of distinguished taste, which I dare say "would enliven the heavy cumbrous fur- "niture with which the French antiquated "taste has doubtless filled the hotel de St. "Dorval."

"Then to-morrow," said the chevalier smiling, "we will all go for a day or two "to Florence, and get some of your dilet- "tanti friends to assist us in the pur- "chase."

"But first," said she, in a tone of sud- den recollection, "let us appropriate a "sum to completing that asylum for or- "phan children on the spot where I lost "both my dear parents."

The chevalier impulsively embraced her.

"Amiable Imogen!" said he; "for the "heart which thus, in the moment of its "flush of pleasure, can steal a thought "from grandeur and ostentation to dedi- "cate it to benevolence and charity, I "shall have henceforth nothing to fear."

"And did you ever fear for my heart?" asked Imogen with a reproachful smile.

"For thy heart? oh! never. But, "Imogen, the influence of the passions, "whether urged by taste, by ambition, "or by vanity, is even over the best heart "sometimes omnipotent. A fine picture "has robbed many a wretch of the pit- "tance that was his due, and science "sometimes intruded on the boundaries "of benevolence; but you, in pursuing "the objects of your taste, have not re- "linquished those of your humanity."

"A compliment, or, if you will, a plea- "sing truth, from you," said Imogen, putting both her hands endearingly into those of the chevalier, "is always so dear "to me, that it is ever my stimulus to an "exertion to merit another. Well, I will "go and inform madame de Rosemont of "our intended removal. But first tell me "you are not displeased with me."

"Displeased with you, Imogen?"

"Yes, for this idle longing after the

" world, this weariness of our sweet and
" tranquil solitude. But then, dear che-
" valier, 'tis so natural to love society at
" my age, and to sigh for a change of
" place and situation—is it not, sir?"

" Oh most natural, Imogen, and, in-
" deed, in some respects, most necessary.
" Perpetual sameness and perpetual se-
" clusion produce a plethory of the mind
" and heart, and yours are both too rich
" to be suffered to prey on themselves.
" Besides, association with new charac-
" ters awakens new reflections, and novel
" objects and situations rouse the mind
" from lethargy, give it a quick and plea-
" sing impulse, and invest it with a fresh
" train of pungent and lively ideas."

" Oh! you are so good, my dear sir,
" so very indulgent to all my little weak-
" nesses, that, where even my own self-
" love can make no excuse for my follies,
" your goodness ever finds a ready plea.
" Well, I shall order supper in the por-
" tico; it is a delicious evening, and you

"will join us soon—*do* join us soon. I "think somehow I am never secure of "myself but in your presence."

The chevalier drew her gently towards him, and for the first time impressed a kiss on a cheek that deeply blushed its bashful sense of the ardent pressure.—Then leading her towards the door, he said, "Go, syren! you steal me from my-"self."

CHAP. XXVIII.

And hence the charm historic scenes impart;
Hence Tiber awes, and Avon melts the heart;
Aërial forms in Tempé's classic vale
Glance thro' the gloom and whisper in the gale;
In wild Vaucluse with Love and Laura dwell,
And watch and weep in Eloisa's cell.

Pleasures of Memory, Part I.

THE morning of their departure from Italy at last arrived, and Imogen bade adieu to the shades of the Arno with a smile that was dimmed with a tear.—

Her heart rapturously bounded forward towards the goal of pleasure and variety, yet a tender melancholy checked its pulsation when she bade farewell to the spot which contained the ashes of her parents.

Their travelling suite consisted of three carriages and a number of horsemen.—The lady de Rosemont travelled with her own woman in a litter, Imogen and the chevalier de Sorville in an open vehicle for the convenience of viewing the country, and Beatrice and two female attendants in one of the carriages of the late count.

Imogen had proceeded a considerable way, wrapt in a profound reverie and involved in a musing silence, which the chevalier did not attempt to interrupt; while her tearful and oft-wiped eyes still dwelt on the groves of de Fiora, until the haze of distance veiled them in its blue mists, and blended their glowing scenes in the undistinguished tint of the remote perspective landscape. But as those ob-

jects which sustained the melancholy train of her pensive ideas gradually receded from her strained glance, her perception awakened to the scenes through which she traveled. Her young and ardent fancy again plumed its drooping wing, and soared into the airy regions of expected joys and fancied pleasures, while the beauty and variety of those objects which struck her eye at every step again awakened her mind to the reception of delightful impressions.

In order to vary their route, and to obviate those melancholy recollections having gone over the same ground with the count de St. Dorval might elicit, the chevalier planned that they should pass through the Genoese territories on their way to Avignon, from thence cross the Rhone, a little above its confluence with the Durance, to Languedoc, and so proceed by Viverais, Auvergne, and Blaisois, (the most beautiful provinces in France,) to Paris.

To render this journey a tour of taste, of pleasure, of sentiment, and instruction, to his charming ward, it was proposed that they should visit every spot endowed with a moral interest, as well as enriched by natural beauty, which held a distinguished place in the records of history, was sacred to the acts of the patriot, the feats of the hero, or the memory of departed genius.

They continued to proceed along the banks of the Arno, as it wound its varying course from the heights of the snow-crowned Appenines, receiving in its fertilizing progress the tributary streams of the humble Sieva, till it poured its blue waves into the bosom of the Mediterranean.

As they passed through the beautiful Val de Arno, all the enthusiast raptures of picturesque taste awakened in the bosom of Imogen. The light and elegant villas of the Tuscan nobility betrayed their shining marble domes through the foliage of pomegranate groves, then rich in their

golden fruit, and the glowing orangeries, whose trees, like her own young and intelligent mind, were at once rich in fruit and blossom. Groupes of peasantry, animated by that fire and vivacity which distinguishes the natives of Tuscany, were gathering in the olives from plantations that seemed unable to support the abundance of their produce; while their labour was cheered by the oboe's enlivening tones, which waked the echo of the hills with a sound as picturesque as the scenes through which it vibrated.

"It is supposed," said the chevalier, "that this charming valley was a lake be-"fore the Arno forced its passage a little "above Regnano, whose spires you may "now see glittering above that grove of "almonds to the left."

"As the fables of ancient naturalists," said Imogen, "tell us, the Mediterranean "forced its passage through those moun-"tains which now on either side guard "the coasts of Europe and Africa. When

"I was at Florence they talked of some "elephants' bones having been found in "this beautiful valley. Was such a dis-"covery made, sir?"

"There *were* some elephants' bones "dug up here, which afforded a variety of "curious hypotheses to the natural philo-"sophers of Italy. Nature, pregnant in "phenomena, sometimes deigns to unveil "her mysteries, to throw a light upon the "researches of genius into the records of "time, and satisfy that laudable curiosity "of the human mind from whence all "knowledge flows."

The first stage they made was at the little village of Certaldo, famous in poetic history for having been for some time the residence of Boccace, and the place from whence many of his tender and elegant letters to Petrarch were dated. As they stood gazing on the ruins of a small house tradition still marked out as *la casa di Boccace*, Imogen, addressing her guardian, with a sigh said:

"Do you know, my dear sir, I should "like infinitely to perform a classic pil- "grimage through Italy, and pay my ho- "mage at the many shrines it contains, "sacred to the remains of departed ge- "nius. Pensively would I wander to the "convent of St. Dominick in Ferrara to "pour the oblation of a tear on the tomb "of Ariosto, and, ere its trace was yet ef- "faced from my cheek, direct my steps to "the blue hills of Euganné, where repose "the ashes of Petrarch; while at Pausi- "lippo I would——"

Here a yawn from madame de Rose- mont, who saw nothing in a heap of ruined walls that compensated for the endurance of a vertical sun, interrupted the poetic route of Imogen; and the chevalier laugh- ingly said: "But, my fair enthusiast, in "your homage for the *dead*, pray take the "*living* into your consideration, and re- "collect that neither you nor my sister "have had any refreshment since you left "the villa de Fiora."

Imogen, with a blush and a smile, apologized to madame de Rosemont, and they proceeded to the inn, where a repast was prepared for them by their own attendants. The heat preventing their route for that day, they indulged themselves in a siesta, and set out by moon-light on their journey; Imogen and madame de Rosemont in the litter, the chevalier on horseback. Towards morning they bade adieu to Tuscany, its luxuriant groves of citron and orange, its vine-mantled hills, rich in mines of porphyry, marble, and alabaster, and entered the petty state of Lucca. Its little capital, scarcely three miles in circumference, but situated in a beautiful plain, watered by the river Sirchio, was their next stage; but, true to the ancient customs of the miniature city, the chevalier and his suite were refused admittance until they deposited their swords and fire-arms at its portals. Having visited the manufactories of gold and silver tissues, for which Lucca is so famous, and made

some considerable purchases, they set out before the next morning's dawn for the Genoese territories. As they coasted along the Mediterranean, the grandeur, richness, beauty, and variety, of the scene roused all the tasteful perceptions of poetry and painting in the mind of Imogen. Sometimes, as they descended into a fertile glen, that sheltered in its bosom some rural village, they lost every trace of that maritime character which should have marked its vicinity to the sea; and again gradually stealing from the lowland path along the winding heights of some cultivated eminence, the ocean scenery again betrayed its features; while on the other side towns, villas, and monasteries, seemed to repose at the base of the Appenines, whose distant summits, lit up with the sun's refracted beam, appeared to float on the horizon like luminous vapours.

As they receded from the sea, and advanced into the heart of the country, the landscape assumed a new and striking

aspect; its features became wild, bold, and savage, and the soil, rigid, mountainous, and barren, scarcely afforded sustenance to the lizard, which hung suspended from the vivid heights of the craggy hill, till fancy shrunk in horror from its perilous contemplation, or to the mountain goat, who, clinging to the pointed angles of a cliff, browsed on the scanty vegetation its deep recesses afforded.

"Such a scene as this," said Imogen, who had resumed her seat in the cabriolet, and who almost shuddered as they wound their devious way beneath the threatening danger of impending rocks, "such a scene "as this is finely suited to the sublime "but gloomy genius of Dante, as are the "rich and glowing landscapes we have "left to the airy and animated fancy of "Ariosto."

She then repeated some passages from the *Inferno* and the *Orlando Furioso* in proof of her assertion; to which the chevalier delightedly assented, and repeated

himself a few more equally appropriate quotations.

"But," he added, "a scene which will "awaken a different interest is about to "break upon our view."

He then, as they advanced and the scene expanded, pointed out to his companion's observation a wild and desert track, whose level sands reflected back the beams of the sun.

"That spot," said he, presenting Imogen with a small telescope, "is famous in "sacred tradition as being the desert where "Mary Magdalen performed her penance "after the death of her divine reformer. "It was there she retired shortly after her "arrival at Marseilles with Lazarus and "Joseph, and wept away the sad evening "of her life amidst those desert wilds."

"I thank you for this anecdote, my "dear sir," said Imogen. "It adds a "livelier interest to that already awakened "by the most interesting, though one of "the least perfect, characters the New

"Testament affords; an interest which "perhaps arises from the sympathy of "human nature with its kindred frailty. "Mary was too frail not to excite com- "passion, and too feelingly penitent not "to mingle admiration for her sensibility "with pity for her errors."

Towards the evening of this day "*Genoa* "*il Superbo*" rose on the eye of the travelers in the form of a magnificent amphitheatre. Here they remained one day, visiting every thing the city afforded worthy of observation, and the following morning, an hour before sun-rise, set off for Provence. They preferred crossing the little river Va'ar to proceeding by the mountain path, as they were all eager once more to touch on French ground. The quick and frequent transition of soil, scene, and climate, which characterises Provence, afforded to Imogen's mind a perpetual variety of tasteful gratification. The hot winds which blew from the Mediterranean gradually moderated into ge-

nial tepid gales as they receded further from the sea-shore; while to the dry and sandy soil of the central parts succeeded expansive plains of rich vegetation, intersected with innumerable streams, whose fertilized banks were covered with flocks, some reposing amidst the abundance of their pasturage, and some, just emerged from the water, shaking their dripping snowy fleece to the flashing sun-beam; while the blue aërial brows of the surrounding hills majestically beetled over the vineyards that crept along their bases, and mingled their fantastic drapery with the glowing plantations of the fig, orange, almond, and pomegranate trees. As they advanced northward, that branch of the Alps which runs north-east of Provence, and divides it from the territories of the Sardinian monarch, appeared distinct to the eye.

"Do you recollect," said Imogen, as they gazed on their stupendous heights, "in what contempt the Italians of the four-"teenth century held all those who dwelt

"on this side the Alps? 'Those tramon-
"tanes, those barbarians,' says Petrarch,
"'from whom we are separated by the
"Alps, are almost unacquainted even with
"the name of Homer; the book which
"passes there under that title is the sorry
"abridgement of a school-boy.'"

"And yet," said the chevalier, "in
"less than two centuries after, Rome was
"taken and pillaged by those barbarians,
"and their pope made a prisoner by one
"of the princes of France."

"The heroic but unfortunate duke de
"Bourbon," said Imogen, "who fell the
"victim of his monarch's envy and of the
"jealousy of the queen mother."

"Your memory is so accurate," said
the chevalier smiling, "that you would
"rank high on the intellectual scale in
"Gascony, where that gift is preferred
"to every other faculty of the human
"mind."

They now continued to wind along a
road that lay at the foot of the Alps,

amidst the soft gloom and fragrant dews of stealing twilight.

"See," said the chevalier, "the sum-
"mit of that Alpine height still gleams on
"the horizon like a meteor, as its snowy
"point catches the sun's last fading beam,
"while the lesser hills are already involved
"in the mists of evening that roll like
"agitated billows down their rugged
"sides."

"And hark, dear sir," exclaimed the delighted Imogen, "what a fine corres-
"ponding effect does that mountain tor-
"rent produce as its deep roar mingles
"with the faint vibration of that distant
"horn, whose wild tones find an endless
"echo in the cavities of the hills."

The moon, as it now broke from behind a mass of clouds, skirting their broken sides with its silver beams, poured its mild light over a scene whose interest varied with every progressive step.

"The landscape begins," said the chevalier, "too lose its character of the sub-

"lime, and steal into the beautiful. This "fading Alpine chain, you perceive, is "softening by an almost imperceptible "degree into gentle swells, and half a "league further will lose itself in the rich "and level plains of Provence.

About midnight they reached a romantic village ten leagues from the city of Aix. Their *auberge* was the rude hut of a peasant, where the *avant-courier* procured them such accommodation as such a place could be supposed to afford. Every thing, however, that was new to Imogen was delightful; and their own traveling stores being entirely exhausted, she supped cheerfully on fried eggs and black bread, and slept as soundly on a mattress of straw as if the cygnet had contributed its bosom's softness to lure her repose; while the generally-placid temper of madame de Rosemont was a little "forced from its calm "mood" at an inconvenience which, as she had been an old traveler, had not novelty to recommend it, and to which habit

itself would not have easily reconciled her.

The next morning, as

"Jocund dawn sat tip-toe on the misty
"Mountain's top,"

they proceeded on their route, and began to coast along the delicious banks of the Durance. About noon they came within sight of Avignon. All the emotion with which Imogen had last beheld it, and the recollection of her father having then accompanied her, struck upon her awakened mind. The hilarity of her countenance vanished, her smiles of gratified taste disappeared, and tears of sorrowing recollection dimmed those eyes whose glance no longer dwelt in rapture on the surrounding beauties of nature's gay creation. The chevalier, entering at once into the nature of her feelings, yet with his usual refined delicacy appearing not to notice them, said: "The curiosity you expressed, when "we last beheld those spires, to visit Avig- "non can now be gratified with infinitely "more interest and pleasure; for you are

"now not only acquainted with its poli-
"tical history, but you have read the life
"and works and speak the language of
"Petrarch.

Imogen, whose heart was more alive than her fancy, answered only by a sigh; and, while the chevalier continued to talk of Avignon, thought only of her father.

On their arrival at Avignon they were chagrined to find the agents had not been punctual to the appointment made by the chevalier, and de Sorville proposed, that, as no business could be transacted until they arrived, they should spend the intermediate time in visiting every thing worthy of attention in a place pregnant with objects of curiosity and interest. When they had dined, the chevalier and Imogen (madame de Rosemont refusing to accompany them on the plea of fatigue) went to visit the tomb of Laura. The young traveler, with the liveliest emotions of enthusiasm and curiosity, traversed the numerous streets of this ancient and magnificent

city, while, amidst the various changes it had sustained in a succession of ages, she attempted to ascertain those places identified in the familiar letters of Petrarch, Boccace, and Philip de Vitre. The chevalier pointed out to her observation the palace which for more than half a century had been the papal residence, and which, even in its decay, gave evidence of its former splendor and magnificence; while in the suburbs a guide conducted them to a house which tradition still marked as having been the residence of the illustrious and unfortunate Laura de Sade. As they returned to the town, and walked up the street leading to the church of St. Clair, going to which Petrarch first beheld the mistress which his passion had immortalized, the beautiful picture he had drawn of her in one of the happiest of his sonnets recurred to the memory of Imogen, and, under the influence of awakened imagination, she almost thought she beheld the lovely form of Laura gliding towards her with that

look of infantile sweetness and vivacity her lover so fondly describes.

When they arrived at the church of the Cordeliers, which contained her ashes, a young sacristan, a brother of the order, who was leaning against the door of the chancel as they entered, politely offered to be their guide; and, lighting a flambeau that lay on a table in the vestry, conducted them to the tomb of Laura. It was a plain marble slab erected beneath the arch which formed the entrance into the chapel.

"There," said the young sacristan, "moulder the remains of that immortal "beauty. Francis the First ordered this "tomb to be opened in his presence, influ- "enced by a wish to ascertain whether this "was the tomb of Petrarch's mistress."

"And was his curiosity gratified?" demanded Imogen eagerly.

"Lady, a few small human bones," replied the other, "and a sonnet of Pe- "trarch's, were all that repaid his exer-

" tions, were all that remained of the beau-
" tiful Laura."

" Alas!" exclaimed Imogen, applying her veil to her eyes.

" Francis the First," said the chevalier, gently drawing her away from her melancholy object of contemplation, " Francis " the First was, with the exception of our " present king, not only the most heroic " and valiant monarch France ever boast-" ed, but the most enlightened and ac-" complished. How strongly does this " little anecdote mark his character, and " how eminently must he have possessed " that species of enthusiasm which ever " characterises genius, and almost always " accompanies feeling and taste!"

" The lady Laura," said the sacristan, extinguishing his torch as they reached the chancel, " died, as it is said, of the " plague."

" Which," added the chevalier, " de-" solated all Europe in 1347. I remem-" ber," he continued, addressing Imogen,

"how much you were affected by the "animated but dreadful picture drawn of "it by Boccace."

Then, thanking the courteous brother for his polite attention, they returned to the auberge, where they found the agents, who had arrived in their absence.

The rest of the evening and part of the ensuing morning were wholly devoted to business. Imogen, at the chevalier's request, examined every account and settlement herself, and ascertained to a fraction the extent of her personal and landed property; and, having recommended her tenantry and serfs to the care of her agents until she should return to Provence herself, and received a considerable sum of money, she bade adieu to Avignon.

When they were seated in the light bark which wafted them across the Rhone to Languedoc, Imogen fixed her eyes on the retreating spires of Avignon with profound emotion; and as the sun shed its meridian beam on the beautiful vale of Comtat

Venaison, in which it was situated, she recollected the description given of it by Petrarch, who, viewing it through the medium of his own gloomy fate, paints it as a desert watered by a river which the spirit of the storms perpetually invested with tempestuous horrors.

"Unhappy Petrarch!" mentally exclaimed Imogen: "blest with nature's "richest endowments, genius, health, and "beauty, honoured with the esteem of the "first potentate of the earth; though sur-"rounded by all that could delight the "mind or gratify the ambition of man, "still was thy heart dead to pleasure, for "the idol of its homage was lost to thee "for ever!"

Like those sympathetic tones produced in a quiescent chord agitated by the pulses of the air, and vibrating in unison with the sound struck from an approximating string, so did this simple, this impulsive apostrophe to the misfortunes of the unhappy Petrarch produce in the mind of

Imogen a kindred recollection of her own long-stifled and secret source of sorrow; which still, in the intervals of sweet but dangerous memory, controlled every latent fibre of her heart, and waked the nerve of passion, until despair rather than reason subdued its vital thrill.

From one of those soul-dissolving reveries, so sweet and yet so fatal, and which since her arrival in France (though not without the severest self-reprobation) she had indulged more frequently than she had done since her affiance and union with the chevalier de Sorville, the chevalier himself awakened her by pointing out some beautiful features in the landscapes to her observation. Imogen, endeavouring to rouse herself, wiped a tear from her cheek, and stifled a sigh on her lip, and then took a part, though an incoherent one, in the conversation.

Having again rejoined their carriages, they continued to wind along the shores of the Loire, which, rising in the Cevennes,

flows through the most beautiful provinces in France, and, swelled in its progress by the tributary streams of many inferior rivers, pours itself into the Bay of Biscay. The travellers passed with great rapidity through Viverais, where large parties of military being stationed, rendered provisions and accommodation extremely scarce; but in the beautiful plains of Auvergne they lingered with delight. Imogen was even sensible of a tender regret in leaving that romantic province, and could scarcely tear herself away from the enchanting valley of Simagne.

At the small but ancient town of Usson they proposed remaining two days. Its castle, or rather fortress, was then the retreat of the beautiful but unfortunate Margaret de Valois, the daughter of Catherine de Medicis, and the long-neglected wife of Henry the Fourth. Madame de Rosemont in the early part of her life had been in the queen's service, and more attached to the person of her royal mistress than

was generally compatible with the coldness of her disposition. Since her marriage with the baron de Rosemont she had seen the queen but once, who had received her with such gracious kindness as induced her to seize on the opportunity passing through Usson afforded her of again paying her respects.

As they approached Usson, Imogen fixed her eyes on its ancient fortress with a thrill of profound emotion. The castle of Usson stood upon a rock, savage, wild, and inaccessible, and its gloomy turrets threw their bold and dark shadows over a river which wound round its base.

"I do not wonder," said the chevalier, observing the expressive countenance of Imogen, "that you should behold that "gloomy structure with interest and cu- "riosity, the voluntary prison of the "daughter, the sister, and the wife, of a "king. During the civil wars carried on "between her brother, Charles the Ninth, "and her then persecuted royal husband,

"Margaret retired to Agen, where she "held for some time her miniature court; "but, being by her unnatural brother "forced from thence and brought prisoner to Usson, by an address worthy of "that genius for which she is so justly "celebrated, she found means to expel "the marquis de Carmelac, the governor, "made herself mistress of the place, and, "still deprived of that rank she should "hold in the world by the aversion of her "husband, keeps there her little court."

While the chevalier was speaking, Imogen for the first time observed some trace of emotion in the countenance of madame de Rosemont. The affections of her youth seemed to warm her habitually-cold heart; and, with eyes not unmoistened by a tear, she related some interesting anecdotes of her royal mistress, whose character she endeavoured with some energy to clear from the aspersions of levity so generally cast on it. Imogen thought her phlegmatic friend never appeared so amiable, and she

involuntarily kissed her hand as she thanked her for the gratification she had afforded her.

The morning after their arrival at Usson the chevalier and his noble ward, equally anxious to behold this extraordinary woman as madame de Rosemont, and as the queen received the visits of all travelers of rank with courteous condescension, sent in their names to the chamberlain; and, having changed their simple traveling habits for dresses suitable to the occasion, as soon as they had obtained leave of presentation by one of the gentlemen in waiting, they proceeded to the castle. Having passed through a large suite of apartments, vast, gloomy, and antiquated, though not destitute of splendor, in some of which a few straggling courtiers were lounging, and in others playing at primero and chess, they were conducted by a gentleman into the chamber of audience. The queen was standing at a window, conversing with some foreign officers of distinc-

tion, and surrounded by all the principal nobility of her little court. Her reception of the travellers was elegant and condescending, and her dignified familiarity at once elicited affection and imposed respect. Madame de Rosemont she instantly and affectionately recognized as an old friend; and, in her conversation with her, dwelt with affecting earnestness on the recollection of that period when they had been first known to each other, when a world bowed at her nod, and all that rank, beauty, power, and talents, could confer, contributed to render her happy. The chevalier she addressed with great politeness; and, when Imogen was introduced to her as the lady de St. Dorval of Provence, she gazed on her with apparent pleasure and curiosity, and said that she recollected the late count de St. Dorval, one of the most accomplished cavaliers of his day, when he broke a lance at a tournament given by her brother, Francis the Second. She more than once smiled at

the *naïveté* of Imogen's answers, which, though uttered with great simplicity and a blushing countenance, were full of point; and, turning from her with a smile, she said to one of her courtiers: "She is less "beautiful than touching; but there lurks "more danger in her amiable originality "than even in beauty itself."

Although the queen had lost that gloss of loveliness which rendered her so celebrated as a beauty, she was still charming, and never perhaps more truly interesting. The air *un peu libertin* which still reveled in her beautiful eyes was indicative of the vivacity of her character, which the invidious malice of her enemies had construed into a criminal levity. The travelers took leave of this amiable but nominal sovereign, impressed with the highest admiration of her manners, person, and accomplishments.

"For the first time," said Imogen, "I "perceive a shade in the character of our "gallant king. How can he feel an

"aversion for or abandon this charming "woman?"

"It is indeed a problem," said the chevalier, "only to be solved by the influence "of party and religious bigotry. The "marriage was a political one, but Mar- "garet had charms of person and mind to "convert it into a union of love, could she "have taught the king to forget she was "the daughter of the house of Valois and "a Catholic. The king too found a sanc- "tion for his indifference in the levity of "the queen, who sought in the pleasures "of an adulatory world an equivalent for "those sweet and sober enjoyments she "was deprived of in her domestic sphere."

The next town they made any stay in beyond their usual nightly stage was Blois, induced by their wishes to visit its castle, so renowned in the annals of that age, and where so many recent facts had occurred to awaken interest in the coldest bosom, and animate the heart to the liveliest throb of enthusiasm. Having obtained leave of

admittance from the governor, accompanied by an officer of the garrison, an old friend of the chevalier's, they proceeded to that ancient and magnificent structure which had been the tomb of so many princes.

"Here," said the officer as they entered a spacious but gloomy banqueting-hall, "here is the apartment where Margaret, "the beautiful sister of our gallant Francis "the First, was married to Henry d'Al- "bret king of Navarre, and grandsire to "our present king."

"She was not only beautiful," said the chevalier, "but so celebrated for her ta- "lents, that she obtained the title of the "tenth muse and the fourth grace."

"And in this apartment," continued the officer, "had the present monarch an "interview with his unfortunate queen "and her mother."

"And if I recollect right," said the chevalier, "that cypress walk, which sheds "such a gloom on these casements, was

"planted by Catharine de Medicis, who "died in this castle."

They then proceeded to the apartment where the great duke de Guise had been assassinated by Catharine and her son Henry the Third. The bed he had slept in still filled a corner of the room, and the officer pointed with his sword to a board in the cedar floor, which was still crimsoned with the princely blood of the sufferer, while an air of gloomy magnificence reigned on every side. Imogen shuddered with horror; and, turning into another apartment, seated herself in an open casement, while the rest of the party went to visit the chateau Renegaud, where the cardinal de Guise was put to death by the murderers of his brother. The virtues, the talents, of these unfortunate victims of inordinate ambition and party hatred rushed to her mind, and the sufferings of the amiable duchess de Guise for her gallant husband, to whom she was so tenderly attached, drew a tear to her eye, which swelled with a kindred drop of

compassion when she called to mind the maternal anguish which rent the heart of the dowager duchess de Guise, who, in the poignancy of a mother's feelings, as she embarked on the Loire, stretched her arm towards the castle of Blois, and exclaimed as it receded from her tear-stained glance (apostrophising the spirit of Louis the Twelth): "Shade of my royal grand-"sire! didst thou, O sainted king, erect "those walls to be the sepulchre of thy "descendants, the tomb of the murdered "offspring of thy grand-daughter?"

The eyes of Imogen were yet moist when the chevalier and the rest of the party returned; and, having walked through several apartments, and examined the various and curious devices painted on the windows or carved on the doors, accompanied by their guide and a few officers of the garrison known to the chevalier and anxious to be known to the youthful lady de St. Dorval, they returned to the auberge to supper, and early the next morning they proceeded on their route to Paris.

CHAP. XXIX.

——— Canst thou bear wealth,
And pleasure's melting touch? Thou hast known virtue
But at scanty board: she has wak'd with thee
To chilling vapours in the midnight vault,
And beckon'd thee to hardships, tears, and penance.
Wilt thou acknowledge the divine instructress
When syren pleasure wraps thee in delight?

WALPOLE.

Les amours dessinoient ses pas,
La volupté suivoit ses traces,
Les plaisirs animèrent ses graces,
Et s'entrelacèrent entre ses bras.

DE MOUSTIER.

NOTWITHSTANDING the pleasure and instruction Imogen had derived from her delightful and interesting journey, her heart bounded with joy when she found herself within the gates of Paris. It was dark when they arrived, and the pleasures of fancy and expectation were not damped

by that disgust narrow, dirty, and gloomy streets, succeeding to the charms of nature, would have inspired on her first view of that great and populous city. The hotel de St. Dorval lay in the Fauxbourg St. Germaine. It was a vast and ancient structure, surrounded by a large square court and a high wall. The *maître d'hotel*, who had hired a suite of servants on the receipt of the chevalier's orders, and who had every thing in readiness for the reception of his lady, received her at the gate, accompanied by the rest of the domestics, with each a torch in his hand. The hotel was brilliantly illuminated, and an elegant supper served up immediately on the arrival of its mistress, and Imogen, for the first time appearing in the character of a hostess, mingled with the spontaneous cordiality of an affectionate welcome the polished graces of the most wakeful attention. The chevalier and his sister accepted of apartments for that night at the hotel de St. Dorval, and, notwithstanding a

pressing invitation, removed the next day to their respective houses. The morning after her arrival was entirely devoted by the delighted and busy Imogen to the examination of her house, furniture, equipages, and all the innumerable and splendid *et cætera* which fill up the train of rank and opulence: but her house, though vast, was Gothic; her furniture, though magnificent, was cumbrous and antique; the carriages, according to the account of an old coachman, who had served two generations in her family, had not been drawn out since the coronation of Charles the Ninth, and were a species of litter, whose rich ornaments and gaudy trappings had lost their splendor in the lapse of time; while her train of domestics, with the exception of the old family coachman, was the only modern articles in her establishment.

Imogen, while she was highly amused with the Gothic character of every thing around her, gave boundless scope to taste

and fancy in the revolutions she began to plan and the improvements she meditated. In the midst of that delightful flurry of spirits which new and pleasing objects and sensations ever awaken in the mind of the gay and youthful, Imogen was caught by her guardian, who came to pay her an early visit.

"You see," said she, linking her arm through his as they rambled through the apartments, "how busy you find me, but I am now only busy in speculation."

"And when are your projects to be "realised?" said the chevalier laughing.

"Why, with all possible expedition; "but you must lend me your assistance. "I must have workmen and workwomen "of every description; artists and me- "chanics, projectors and executors, all "must contribute their powers to the re- "volution I mean to effect. In short, my "dear sir, I am going to dispossess the "usurper *Gothic Inelegance* of her throne,

" and restore *Taste* to her rightful em-
" pire."

" But then, my dear lively Imogen, are
" you not aware of the danger of sudden
" innovation in every system? and that
" even the efficient cause of the best
" change in antiquated error frequently
" becomes itself the first victim of revolu-
" tionary influence?"

" But, my dear cautious guardian, if a
" *probable* danger were always to operate
" as a sufficient determent from effecting
" a *certain* good, what becomes of that
" glorious band of self-immolated spirits
" who——"

" Well well," interrupted the cheva-
lier, kissing the hand that pressed his arm,
" I am too anxious to agree with you on
" every point to oppose your arguments
" on this; only remember this, that in
" every scheme, whether public or private,
" trivial or important, prudence forms the
" firmest basis of success. And now we
" will change the subject. I have received

" a letter from your amiable conqueror of " Laon."

Imogen started, changed colour, and quickened her pace as they walked on.

" I had occasion to write to him," continued the chevalier, " on a business very " near my heart, and to which his influence " and interest were essentially necessary. " He has with his usual generosity pro- " mised me both, although his present si- " tuation prevents his immediate exertion " of either."

" His *present situation?*" faintly exclaimed Imogen.

" Since his marriage," continued the chevalier, " amiable in his domestic as " great in his public character, he has liv- " ed entirely with his family at the cha- " teau de Montargis in Provence, except " when in his military capacity he has " been obliged to attend the king; for all " his court places he has resigned, in spite " of his majesty's solicitude to keep him " always near his person. He is now di-

"viding his tenderest attention between "his father and his wife. The former, "the victim of inordinate and disappointed ambition, oppressed with bodily as "well as mental disease, is hurrying fast "from a world whose ostentatious nothings so entirely engrossed him; and "the baroness de Montargis is on the "point of becoming the most sacred, the "most important of characters—a mother. "Thus writes the baron de Montargis. "But his letter is dated *three months* "back; and it was sent to me by hand to "Italy, and forwarded again from thence "here."

Imogen involuntarily drew her arm from the chevalier's, and sat down on a *fauteuil;* the chevalier followed her example, and a pause of a minute ensued.

In the train of alluring expectations which beckoned Imogen to France, a hope scarcely understood, a wish scarcely defined, had insidiously stolen. She dare not, she did not, confess even to herself,

that hope, that wish, was once more to behold the minstrel of Provence; yet, when rapture hung upon the witchcraft of her song, when applause retraced the magic of her pencil, and celebrity blazoned forth her genius and her talents, her vanity swelled to the triumph, her ambition attained its gaol, but her heart, unmoved, untouched, weighed the plaudits of the world in the scale of comparison with one glance of rapturous approbation from the eye of him she had loved, and the world and its plaudits were but a feather in the balance. The intelligence therefore that the baron de Montargis was settled in Provence carried with it something of disappointment which her reason disowned, but which her soul felt; and the sudden mention of his name, a name so dear, so grateful, and so long denied her ear, caused a momentary convulsion of the heart, whose irritation was lulled by the sentiments awakened by a few talismanic words. "The baron de Montargis en-

" gaged in the sweet, the sacred, the ten-
" der duties of a son, a husband, a father!"
mentally, fervently repeated Imogen. The
image of the young, the blooming min-
strel disappeared. She turned round and
looked at the chevalier; his eyes full of
tenderness were fixed on her: her heart
acknowledged the appeal; in a moment
she was all herself, and with a calm smile
said: " Any new trait of perfection in the
" character of the baron de Montargis
" pleases without surprising me; for is he
" not the *friend* of MY *friend*!" and she
put her hand endearingly into that of the
chevalier, while something like a pang of
self-accusation smote her heart when she
felt it treasured a secret concealed from
him who ought to be the master of all its
movements; yet the inefficacy of its reve-
lation, independent of the vow pledged to
the baron, reconciled her to what now
appeared a laudable and delicate simula-
tion. The chevalier pressed the hand
clasped in his with tenderness; a sudden

agitation shook his frame; he arose, took a few turns up and down the room, and, again seating himself by his ward, a general conversation took place; and Imogen having engaged him and his sister to spend the day with her, as she meant to remain *incog.* until she had made arrangements for appearing in public, her guardian took his leave.

When we determine on being virtuous we always are so. The spring of tender recollection, though now touched, did not, as it was wont, overflow the bosom of Imogen with the boundless tide of passion. She now had the power of placing limits to its course, for still she repeated: "The "baron de Montargis is a husband, a fa- "ther, and I on the point of becoming "the wife of another." She did not, as she had once done, call in the auxiliary of reason to subdue tenderness; for, dangerous is the result of those arguments the understanding holds with the passions and the heart. Imogen did wiser; she fled

from the intrusion of thought. All the remaining evening was devoted to the society of the chevalier and madame de Rosemont, and when she arose the next day the elegant speculations of taste chased away the dangerous speculations of the heart.

The valuable spoils of art which Imogen had borne away with her from Italy had all safely arrived, the hotel de St. Dorval was filled with workmen of every description, and the best artists and projectors Paris afforded were employed.

In sentiment the lady de St. Dorval had got in advance with her species; her ideas were those of enlightened ages yet to come, but her taste was antiquated, for it was truly Attic. She looked at the hotel de St. Dorval, where every thing was equally inimical to elegance and convenience. She thought of the dwelling of Pericles and Aspasia, and believed that the union of taste and accommodation was not impracticable. The rich but airy folds of Grecian drapery displaced the curious but

heavy workmanship of the Gobelins; the cumbrous and immoveable fauteuils were deposed in favour of the light and elegantly-formed stool, the canopied seat, or luxurious couch; tables of massy strength and vast magnitude, curiously carved and gaudily gilt, were supplanted by slabs of Parian marble, supported by slender pillars twined with the vine's golden foilage, and reflecting on their polished suface chandeliers of sparkling crystal; looking-glasses lost in the immensity of their tarnished frames gave way to the Venetian mirrors, hung by the hands of the graces; while the antique lamp, suspended by rosy wreaths, usurped the place of heavy branches; and Etruscan vases shed from their bosoms the richest perfumes of the east; musical instruments of every description were dispersed through the apartments; or collected in a hall dedicated to Apollo, and filled with some of the best productions of statuary and painting.

To a library all ready well filled was

added the finest collection of modern English, French, and Italian, books; and some valuable medals, a collection of fine antiques, and a number of natural curiosities, presented her a few days after her arrival by the chevalier, were arranged with taste and judgment in the recesses which separated the bookcases; while magnificence was every where chastened by simplicity and splendor by taste, and all that could allure to pleasurable enjoyment or tasteful and intellectual gratification, added to the social comforts of convenience and accommodation, was to be found at the hotel de St. Dorval. Every where the genius of its mistress was discernible; nothing was incongruous; the harmony of order, the uniformity of correct though fanciful taste, shed their influence on every side. In the speculation of magnificence Imogen had taken no account of expence. Hitherto a stranger almost to the use and entirely to the possession of money, she looked on her riches as

inexhaustible, and expended them, as if in fact they were so; and, while she gave a scope to her tasteful but extravagant propensities, one sentiment of humanity was still predominant above those of ostentation; for she felt in pursuing her own gratification she was affording the means of subsistence to the poor and the industrious, and she therefore daily multiplied her workmen beyond the calculation of expence laid down by her projector, who had by no means limited his genius to any rule of moderation or economy. Meantime the chevalier beheld the extravagant progress of this domestic and tasteful revolution sometimes with a slight but friendly remonstrance, sometimes with a faint approbation, but never with any very obvious satisfaction. It was long before he could induce the delighted and always occupied Imogen to look over the accounts, which were hourly brought in by tradesmen, artisans, and mechanics; and she then to her amazement found they ex-

ceeded the large sums she had brought from Provence, and which she supposed would have nearly carried her through the winter's campaign. To satisfy even the present demands she was therefore obliged to draw on the Parisian banker for a sum deposited in his hands by the late count.

"This expenditure is immense," said the chevalier gravely, "considering that "your residence here must be always very "transient, according to your father's will, "which, however opposed by inclination, "will be always *your* law, I am certain."

"The expenditure is indeed great," said Imogen seriously; "by far greater than I "imagined; but, my house finished, I "shall have little inducement to expence "afterwards."

The chevalier faintly smiled, and shook his head.

"Besides," continued she, "I have not "merely been led away by my own gra-"tification. My ability to do good is

"great, and the medium through which "it now flows affords employment to the "industrious, while it relieves the indi-"gent."

"That such may have been your do-"minant motive, my dear Imogen, I do "not doubt. Society has now indeed "great and powerful claims on you; but "in filling up the code of moral duties "let us draw a line of distinction between "those immediately connected with our-"selves and within the influence of our "own sphere, and those we owe in ge-"neral to the world; and without arraign-"ing your benevolence in the present in-"stance, suffer me to wish it had been "exercised in favour of some of your poor "Provençal tenants rather than those who, "if they rank with the industrious, can "never be reckoned on the list of the in-"digent, in a place where ostentatious "luxury will always find employment for "those who can contribute to its indul-"gence."

Imogen for a moment stood confused and silent, then with a forced smile said:

"Well you have convinced me that *humanity* was totally out of the question; but you will at least allow there was an absolute necessity for a rèform in the antiquated system of affairs here."

"Your *grandfather*, who chiefly resided here, and was a man of princely ideas and taste, did not think so," said the chevalier drily.

"Neither should I," said Imogen sportively, "if I were *my grandfather*."

This little sally was only answered by a sigh, and the chevalier demanded when she meant to send her father's letter to the duchess de Guise.

"Oh! as soon as you please *now*," replied she; "for *now*, should she deign to visit me, I shall not be afraid of losing sight of my illustrious guest in the *sombre* shades of an immense arm-chair. Now I am armed at all points for the critical review of Parisian taste and judgment."

"You will see nothing like this," said the chevalier, looking round the elegant apartment in which they sat, "in all Paris."

"I hope not," replied Imogen with a triumphant smile. Then, going to a magnificent escrutoir, over which was placed a beautiful marble statue of *Silence*, with her finger on her lip and a key suspended from her girdle, Imogen unlocked it, drew forth the letter of the count de St. Dorval, and fixed her eyes on the superscription. While she fastened her lips on those characters traced by a hand once so dear, and now so cold, a tear dropt on the kiss, and hallowed its impression. The chevalier, taking the letter from her hand, imbued his lip with the precious dew of filial sorrow; and gazing fondly at her he exclaimed:

"Long o'er the transient pleasures that
"frolic in thy youthful breast may *feeling*
"hold her empire! and while the spring
"of innocent enjoyment still flows to the
"touch of gay impressions, may the sa-

" cred source of sensibility continue pure
" and unexhausted! Oh! lovely is the
" eye whose smile is brightened by a tear,
" like the arch of heaven's promise when
" its living tints sparkle through the dewy
" shower that falls from its many-coloured
" bow!"

The chevalier, after a long and affecting pause, then promised to wait immediately himself on the duchess de Guise, to whom he was slightly known, and shortly after took his leave.

When he returned from the hotel de Guise he called on Imogen, to assure her of the duchess's anxiety to receive her, with a pressing invitation to her grace's *lever** the next day.

It was long since an interview with the

* To be permitted to attend the *lever* and *coucher* of the ladies of illustrious rank, or of the royal blood, was then esteemed a mark of distinction. We find it mentioned as a kind of compliment by the great duke de Sully, that the beautiful Gabrielle invited the duchess de Sully to her *lever*.

celebrated duchess de Guise had been looked forward to by Imogen with wishful anxiety; and to the interest which the duchess's own character had awakened was now added that which arose from her late visit to the spot where the husband and brother of this illustrious princess had been murdered; and emotion was flushed to its deepest glow when, alone and in a splendid equipage, attended by almost princely pomp, she arrived at the hotel de Guise. After having been announced, she was conducted through a suite of magnificent apartments to a large and elegant saloon. The gentleman in waiting introduced her to one of the duchess's ladies' companions, who in her turn introduced her to the princess. The duchess de Guise was seated at her toilet, but unengaged in its duties. She was in earnest conversation with a lady of dignified and grave deportment, who sat by her engaged with a small reel that hung from her girdle. When Imogen was announced the princess arose,

and embraced her with that fascinating cordiality which always distinguished her manners even beyond the boundary of nice discrimination; then, turning round, she took her affectionately by the hand, and looking at her for a moment with mingled curiosity and admiration, she said:

"As an earnest of the friendship and "affection I wish to shew the daughter of "the count de St. Dorval, I beg leave to "recommend her in the strongest manner "to the friendship and notice of the du- "chess de Sully."

The elderly lady arose, and, according to the custom of the times, saluted the young stranger; and Imogen then found herself seated between the most celebrated woman and the wife of the most celebrated man of the age.

The duchess de Guise, reared in courts, and deeply skilled in the science of pleasing, always possessed the happy art of rendering her conversation delightful by making the concerns of her auditor its

chief topic. When Imogen entered, she had been blazoning the virtues of the great de Sully to the greedy ear of the duchess; and she now turned the stream of discussion to the character, the virtue, and the talents, of the count de St. Dorval. She called him the unalienable friend of her martyred lord, and the steady adherent to the cause of her persecuted son, whose delivery from the castle of Jours she said he had in part effected. She talked of the beauty of madame de St. Dorval, whom she had once seen at the court of Florence, with admiration, and of her story (which she said made a great noise) with feeling and compassion; while, on the virtuous and venerated character of de Sorville, she touched with an arch smile that called a blush into the cheek of Imogen. The conversation was now interrupted by the entrance of three young ladies splendidly dressed, and all eminently beautiful. The first, who greatly bore away the palm of loveliness from her lovely companions, the

attractive duchess, with difficulty attempted to withdraw; but the duchess, taking both her hands, said:

"For heaven's sake, you, who appear "so superior to the world in every re- "spect, rise above its idle forms, and "give me your society for the rest of the "day. My son is gone to Fontainbleau "with the king, and I shall shut my doors "against all visitors, provided you repay "me for the sacrifice by the pleasure of "your company."

"The consciousness of the happiness "you confer by obliging me to stay," said Imogen smiling, "must be the reward of "your self-denial."

Since Imogen had been first initiated into the pleasures of social intercourse, in the calendar of delightful moments which she had rescued from time's dull round, none had flown by on a more rapid wing than those which she enjoyed during the rest of the day. Always delightful when she wished to delight, always bewitching

when she wished to infatuate, stimulated by that sympathy of taste and mind which existed between the fascinating duchess de Guise and herself, and by the flattering encomiums which hung upon the exertion of her versatile powers, her talents for conversation, and her extraordinary musical abilities, were alternately exerted to entertain her illustrious hostess, and always exerted with success.

Mademoiselle de Guise, not less witty and still more beautiful than her mother, nurtured on adulation, and living only while she imbibed it, yet obliged by her mother's request to pass one evening without presiding at the shrine where countless votarists were wont to pay their homage, and at that critical period deeply engaged in an *affaire du cœur* with the celebrated marquis de Bellegarde, master of the king's horse, yawned away the hours on a couch, or faintly touched the strings of her lute, while she *smiled* applause rather than *pronounced* it on the

lively sallies and original thoughts of her lovely guest.

In the course of the evening the duchess, with maternal freedom, spoke of Imogen's union with the chevalier de Sorville, which she said her father had mentioned in his letter as a matter nearest to his heart; and though she allowed her rank and opulence might have entitled her to a more splendid alliance, independent of her youth, beauty, and accomplishments, which were in themselves sufficient to secure the gratification of the most ambitious views, yet she believed in the scale of happiness Imogen would attain the highest degree, by uniting herself to the most virtuous, the most intelligent, and most generally-esteemed man of the age. Imogen's only comment on this remark was a sigh; and mademoiselle de Guise thought of the handsome gallant marquis de Bellegarde, and smiled at her mother's sober ideas on *love* and *matrimony*.

The duchess then mentioned the neces-

sity of Imogen's appearing immediately at court, whither she would herself conduct her; and in the mean time promised to mention her to the king in a manner likely to procure her the warmest reception, and to do away any little prejudice which might float in the mind of his majesty against the daughter of one of the most obstinate and factious of his nobility.

"To-morrow," said the duchess, "I "follow the court to Fontainbleau, where "I shall have an opportunity of speaking "to the king in your favour. We shall "return the next day, and on the following a court will be held, when I shall "have the honour of presenting the most "charming of women to the most amiable "of monarchs."

It was late when Imogen returned home, yet she found the chevalier there before her. He was walking up and down the hall when she entered it, and sprang forward to receive her with a glow of pleasure animating his countenance.

As he led her into the parlour he said: "You will smile at my folly when I tell "you that I have been three times here in "your absence, and that without being "uneasy at its length. I could not divest "myself of some little anxiety not to be "defined, though easily to be felt. In "short, now that I behold you thrown "upon this great, this dangerous world, I "feel like a mother, when for the first "time she trusts the infant treasure of her "heart from her supporting hand, and "views its unassisted tottering motions "with mingled pleasure and apprehen-"sion."

"Or like a boy," said Imogen smiling, "who gives his captive bird as much li-"berty as the string fastened to its leg "will admit, then, trembling for its es-"cape, longs to draw it back to his bo-"som's prison."

"His *bosom's prison!*" repeated the chevalier, with a melancholy smile. "Ah, "Imogen! that tender expression has

" saved *my* feelings and *your* humanity;
" for though I would not be thought to
" *hold you* in captivity, yet in my BOSOM'S
" *prison* I would indeed willingly confine
" you."

" But, my dear friend," interrupted Imogen endearingly, " though the little
" bird will at first flutter and expand its
" impatient wing, and sport delighted in
" its transient freedom, yet from habitual
" affection it will at last voluntarily seek
" its captivity, and fly back to the enslav-
" ing hand whose caresses are become ne-
" cessary to its happiness."

" Yes, from *habitual affection*, Imo-
" gen," said the chevalier with a profound sigh; " but where the heart seeks the vo-
" luntary glowing impulse of the kindred
" heart——"

" I wish," said Imogen, with affectionate simplicity, yet apparently hurt, " I could say or do *any thing* to please
" you."

The chevalier took both her hands, and kissed them with ardour.

"My beloved Imogen!" he tenderly exclaimed, "every thing you say, every "thing you do, pleases me—pleases me "but too much. I am only mortified that "I cannot catch the magic art from you, "and awaken admiration commensurate "to that I feel. But I am *feeling*, I am "*talking*, with the folly of a romantic "boy; forgive, forget it. Let the gene- "ral self-denial which rules my conduct "atone for this temporary dereliction from "reason and prudence. And now, my "little fluttering bird, that you are re- "turned to the *enslaving hand whose ca- "resses* (sweet thought!) are become ne- "cessary to you, let me have some ac- "count of your wanderings."

Imogen, whose elastic spirits, whose susceptible feelings, were alive to every impression, opposed the tear which swelled in her eye with the smile of frolic pleasure that played on her lip; and, delighted to have the pleasant circumstances of the day recalled to her mind, she burst into a

torrent of rapturous praises on the character of the duchess de Guise; dwelt with the liveliest admiration on the manners, sweetness, and affability, of the young ladies de Guise, de Beuil, and d'Entragues; and mentioned madame de Sully with that interest her being the wife of one of the greatest men of the age awakened.

"Madame de Sully," said the chevalier, "is perhaps the most truly amiable, "though by much the least attractive, the "least fascinating character of any you "have mentioned."

"My dear chevalier, you forgot the "enchanting duchess de Guise is of the "number."

"The duchess is indeed, Imogen, an "*enchantress*; she is even a very amia- "ble, I might almost say a great charac- "ter; but still she is *the woman of the* "*world*, and lives only in a court of which "she once hoped to have been the idol. "Her daughter is too beautiful not to ex- "cite universal admiration in one sex, and

"consequently much envy in the other.
"Let us hope it is in this cause many ma-
"licious reports originate, which slander
"has freely circulated to her disadvan-
"tage, and which has faintly tainted her
"reputation without adducing one proof
"of the error of her conduct."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Imogen,
"you shock me."

"I would only warn you, my dear
"friend," returned the chevalier; "and
"by abating the ardor of those sudden
"predilections, so natural to the warmth
"and inexperience of your character,
"teach you to distinguish the attractive
"and the good, the pleasing and the wor-
"thy; for in that high class of society
"into which you will be now initiated
"they are by no means inseparably con-
"nected; and, under the skilful opera-
"tions of the great lapidary Dissimulation,
"you will find the worthless pebble wear
"the same brilliant polish as the diamond."

"This is a sorry lesson," said Imogen

smiling, "but I am sure a useful and a "just one. I am now almost afraid to "mention mademoiselle d'Entragues, "whose pensive character seems touched "with the sentimental, and who, I con- "fess, greatly interested me."

"Sentiment," said the chevalier, "is "not a characteristic she either possesses "or affects, and what you took for pen- "siveness was only mortification at hear- "ing an account of those court gaieties "in which she could not participate; for "neither she nor any of her family are "admitted to court on account of some "irregularities in the political conduct of "her father and brother. Her character "is formed of those unfeminine qualities, "ambition and enterprise. She is also "artful where a point is to be attained on "which her heart is set, and is so happy "in concealing her defects, that few wo- "men in Paris are more admired than the "beautiful d'Entragues. As for made- "moiselle de Beuil, if so young a crea-

"ture can be said to have any character,
"*hers* is neither dangerous nor artful.—
"She is lively, piquante, and has already
"obtained the character of a *wit*, which
"she is too anxious to preserve not to be
"in danger of losing it."

"But how have you become so well ac-
"quainted with the character of these
"young ladies, my dear sir," exclaimed Imogen, "who are almost a stranger to "Paris?"

"My dearest Imogen," said the chevalier smiling, "true affection is endowed "with a species of *omniscience*, for no-"thing connected with its object is un-"known or indifferent to it. Ever since "I came to Paris, I have been busied in "making myself acquainted with the cha-"racters which compose its circles of "fashion, and especially of those which "frequent the hotel de Guise, where I "supposed you would be most intimate. "The ladies d'Entragues and de Beuil, "I found to be the favorites of made-

" moiselle de Guise; and the possibility " of their becoming your's also, from the " fascination of their manners and vivacity, which so strongly resemble your " own, induced me to enter minutely into " their characters, lest a partial sympathy " might betray you into a boundless and " dangerous confidence."

Imogen's grateful and affectionate heart was deeply touched by this instance of friendship, of tenderness, this lively interest and watchful care of every thing that concerned her.

" I am proud to confess," said she, " that I *can* make no acknowledgment for " your goodness. Such affection as yours " should awaken a feeling that mocks the " power of expression, and it does awaken " it; and trust me, my friend, that I look " forward with a sweet and placid hope to " that moment when your anxiety for your " ward shall repose on a boundless confi- " dence in the conduct of your ——"

Imogen, blushingly and confused at the

impulsive dictates of her heart, abruptly paused. "*Of your wife*" she would have uttered, but the word died on her lips.

The chevalier, transported, pressed her to his heart, and exclaimed:

"This is all sufficient. I demand, I "urge, nothing. Let me repeat, that to "you the destiny of my love is consigned. "It is enough that you will yet be mine; "but be it still reserved for thee to retard "or to accelerate that blissful period."

The chevalier then arose, and, having promised to bring his sister to spend the following day with Imogen, took his leave.

The next day brought with it a crowd of visitors of the first fashion to the hotel de St. Dorval, whose wonder, admiration, and curiosity, were divided between the fairy palace and its fairy queen. Among the number were the ladies d'Entragues and de Beuil, whose warm and infatuating professions of friendship and admiration insensibly undermined that basis of distrust and caution the chevalier had endea-

voured to lay in the mind of his ward. With insinuating familiarity mademoiselle d'Entragues invited herself to spend the evening with Imogen, whom she amused with a thousand anecdotes of fashionable life and fashionable characters, while mademoiselle de Beuil regretted an engagement prevented her a similar pleasure.

The following morning Imogen received a card from the duchess de Guise, intimating her intention of calling on her in the course of the day to conduct her to court. At the appointed hour the princess arrived in a carriage of state, accompanied by her daughter, and the old countess de Noirmontier; so famous for her gallantries, and for that beauty which, even in its decline, had conquered, but could not retain, the fickle heart of Henry the Fourth. The duchess and her companions spent a considerable time in examining the apartments of the hotel de St. Dorval, where every thing appeared curious from its originality, and attractive

from its novelty, independent of the taste and splendor which every where presided.

The duchess was in raptures, and, embracing Imogen, said she should have an altar raised to her as a presiding deity of taste. Mademoiselle de Guise affected her mother's warmth, and the countess de Noirmontier shook her head, and said she recollected the hotel de St. Dorval a very different place in the time of her grandfather; for she was an enemy to innovation of any kind.

When they were seated in the carriage, the duchess complimented Imogen on the elegant simplicy of her dress, and said she did not despair of seeing the Grecian costume revived under the influence of her taste; while the lady de Noirmontier, enveloped in a ruff and fardingale, seemed to admire her dress as little as she had done her furniture.

When they entered the state room of the Louvre, it was already full; and as the presentation of the heiress of the late count

de St. Dorval was expected, every eye was turned on the splendid little group of the duchess de Guise when she entered. At the gay and voluptuous court of Paris, where novelty was held at an equal estimate in the scale of admiration with beauty, Imogen, being the newest, was consequently the most attractive object of the hour; and as neither the king, the minister, nor the duchess de Beaufort, had yet appeared, the claims of interest did not interfere with those of curiosity. The duchess de Guise and her beautiful daughter, always attractive, were instantly surrounded: while those who came to gaze at the young stranger from mere curiosity were fascinated by admiration—an admiration not solely arising from her beauty, for Imogen could scarcely be said to enter the lists of competitorship with mademoiselle de Guise and many other ladies present, but the bright intelligence of her looks, the quick and frequent transition of her complexion, the extreme originality of her sylph-like

drapery, and the *disinvoltura* of her air. A grace so little known at the court of Paris, where formality still maintained her empire even in the precincts of licentiousness, operated like a spell on those whom perfection would have sated, but to whom variety was always captivating. Among the splendid crowd that pressed round her, the wandering and bewildered gaze of the all-astonished, all-delighted Imogen rested with pleasure on the form of the lovely little de Beuil; who, proud to be distinguished even by an eye-beam from the *cynosure* of the moment, made her way through the brilliant mob, and addressed her with her usual animation and warmth.

"My charming friend," she exclaimed, "I have been watching for one look of "invitation from you this hour. You are "certainly the most enviable creature in "the world."

"And why the most enviable?" demanded Imogen.

"Merely, my dear, because you are the "most admired."

Modesty and triumph might have disputed the deep blush that mounted to the cheek of Imogen.

"And I should envy you still more," continued the lively little courtier; "but "that I was once the wonder here myself; "and that my *wonder* was at an end be- "fore three days, merely because a newer "face with higher rank made its appear- "ance. But here comes *one* who will al- "ways attract the dear disinterested world "until she ceases to attract him on whose "nod it is dependent; that is, I mean the "*world at the Louvre.*

Attended by a splendid retinue, and dressed with imperial grandeur, the fair Gabrielle, duchess de Beaufort, made her appearance; and Imogen for the first time beheld the most beautiful woman of the age, and who for so many years had obtained a boundless influence over the heart of her royal lover.

The crowd which had surrounded the shrines of the duchess de Guise and other

popular deities of the day, now all flew to the idol of the world's universal worship; and the duchess and her party, deserted except by a few foreign officers of distinction, strolled to another end of the apartment, and took possession of a seat. No one looked surprised at Imogen, while mademoiselle de Beuil, laughing heartily, said:

"There goes the true spirit of a court: "this is no bad lesson for a novice. But "here comes a cavalier whose homage "would not be the least unacceptable to "the duchess de Beaufort, if she dared to "receive it."

"What! that gentleman in the blue "cloke and black feathers?" demanded Imogen.

"No: he in the scarlet and gold; he "who is the handsomest man in the room, "or indeed in the kingdom; the marquis "de Bellegarde, master of the horse, and "*once* the favourite of the fair Gabrielle, "till he resigned in favour of his royal "master. Remind me to tell you of a

"curious anecdote of an unlucky rencon-
"tre between him and the king at the
"chateau de Courcy, where the fair Ga-
"brielle resided with her father, in the
"first era of her connexion with his ma-
"jesty. You may depend on its authen-
"ticity, for I had it from mademoiselle de
"Guise; and she, I can tell you, is good
"authority for any thing concerning the
"marquis, or the world does her wrong.*
"But pray look at her since the master of
"the horse entered. Yes, she will cer-
"tainly break that little etuis in pieces—
"no; it is safe, for here comes the mar-
"quis."

The marquis de Bellegarde now ap-proached, and seated himself by the younger lady de Guise, with whom he con-

* Mademoiselle de Guise, in her *Memoires de la Cour de Henri Quatre*, mentions a truly-dramatic incident which happened at the hotel de Courcy, and n which the king and the marquis de Bellegarde were the principal actors.

tinued to converse in a kind of murmur: while Imogen, delighted with the vivacious and entertaining powers of her new friend, endeavoured to change the conversation; and observing an elegant looking man, whose countenance beamed with intelligence as he conversed with two gentlemen who stood near them, she inquired his name.

"What, that piquant-looking cavalier "in green and gold, and the order of *le* "*Saint Esprit* suspended from his neck?" demanded mademoiselle de Beuil, twinkling her bright eyes at the object of their observation, and receiving a responsive glance of scrutiny, with the utmost *nonchalance*.

"The same," said Imogen in a low voice, and casting down her eyes to avoid those which were now fixed on her blushing face.

"Oh! that is the marquis de Sancy, "colonel of the Swiss guards, and one of "the king's favourites, though not equally

"fortunate with our *monarch's monarch*; "for in many of his pasquinades he has "given the fair Gabrielle no quarter. "Every one likes to keep well with de "Sancy, for he has as much wit and more "independence than any of the fashion- "able satirists of the day; for you must "know, my dear, that in a certain circle "all these things go by *fashion*, and he "whom the omnipotence of popularity "has once stamped as a *wit* may take out "a letter of licence to play the fool all the "rest of his life. That tall handsome "man conversing with him is the lord "high constable de Montmorency; who, "though not long married to the daugh- "ter of the viscomte de Portes, the beau- "tiful Louisa de Budos, thinks more of "every man's wife than his own; and yet "he is a mere *méchant par air*. But gal- "lantry is the order of the day; and the "duke de Montmorency has not the cou- "rage, though he may have the inclina- "tion to be singular. Pray observe that

"little *lady-like gentleman* who has just "joined them! it is the young marquis de "Chateauneuf. Ah! he observes a new "face. For heaven's sake do not blush "so, or you will be instantly registered in "his book of conquests."

Imogen indeed blushed deeply, for the group to whom her attention was now directed consisted of those identical persons who had intruded on her privacy in the camp of Laon. Their names, as repeated by the little page, she perfectly recollected; but as no glance of recognition lurked in those eyes now earnestly fixed on her in the gaze of curiosity and fashionable confidence, she hoped the slight view they had obtained of the captive of Laon was too imperfect to render it possible they should recognize in the lady de St. Dorval the prisoner of the baron de Montargis; while she involuntarily smiled at the whimsical coincidence which had brought the same persons together to gaze on her at the door of her prison-tent and in the state-chamber of the Louvre.

The marquis de Sancy now advanced towards her party, and, having paid his compliments to the duchess de Guise, requested the honour of an introduction to her noble and lovely *protègée,* which he instantly obtained; and mademoiselle de Beuil, seeing a fair occasion offer itself for paying her homage to the duchess de Beaufort, resigned her place by Imogen to de Sancy. Imogen, who feared the intruder of Laon, and dreaded the most independant satirist of the court, entered with a timid and bashful reluctance into conversation with her new companion; until, fascinated by the insinuating polish of his manner, by that vein of humour which in some respects accorded with the natural playfulness of her own disposition, and finding it almost impossible to be shocked by the poignant severity of the observations the various groups around him elicited, but which were played off with all the ease of a light and frolic wit, she at first listened and smiled, then admired,

and at last participated in his humorous sallies, or replied to them with a spirit not inferior to his own; until, flattered into self-approbation by the pointed attentions of a man of his distinguished talents, and stimulated rather than dazzled by the brilliancy of his conversation, she gave boundless scope to that *naïveté* of manner, that style of animated energy and curious felicity of expression, with which nature had so liberally endowed her, which education had not repressed, and which frequently gave the apparent lustre of wit to the more playful sallies of subtle and gay imagination.

The marquis was, or appeared to be delighted with every thing she said.

"I foresee," said he, "that you will "never be suffered to die a natural death "among us; for Envy, that severe Thales-"tris, will fly from rank to rank among her "cohorts, arming every hand against you, "and exhorting her earth-sprung myrmi-"dons to spare no beauty of mind or per-

" son, but put every charm, every grace,
" to the sword."

" Then," I am afraid," said Imogen laughing, " that Envy, like the heroes of " ancient romance, will combat a *chimæra* " for a being of real existence."

" Why, I confess," said the marquis, " she will have to engage with *some ma-* " *gical illusions*, but she will always find " enough of charming and substantial evils " to glut her vengeance. Already I see " her troops drawn out in battle array. " The stupid young beauties who com- " pose her battalion will fall on the bright " intelligence of those looks, the preju- " diced old ones will attack the *naïf* ori- " ginality of those bewitching manners, " and the professional wits of the other " sex, who even in *woman* never pardon " those talents which surpass their own, " will harass you like skilful archers in " the rear, and point their arrows at that " fair head whose external beauties con- " stitute the least of its charms."

"Then, from you, my lord," said Imogen gaily, "as the most renowned chief "of this last-mentioned dangerous pha- "lanx, let me supplicate and receive mer- "cy. Unequalled as well as unsurpas- "sed, to harass an unresisting enemy were "but to call your generosity in question."

The marquis bowed low. "A compli- "ment from you," said he, "reminds me "of the dart presented by Diana to Pro- "cris, which always reached the heart it "was aimed at, yet always returned to "the hand from whence it flew; since the "manner in which you praise the excel- "lence of another best proves its exist- "ence in yourself."

In such little pointed and graceful gallantries, which possessed more in style than matter, passed away half-an-hour; when the marquis de Chateauneuf again took his place opposite Imogen, and the marquis de Sancy asked her if she was acquainted with the owner of those unmeaning orbs then fixed on her, "who looks," he added

laughingly, "like an Arabian manuscript, "all *flowers* and *gold*."

"Without one legible *character* in the "whole work, I suppose," said Imogen, "except what the *title-page* presents, and "there we read my lord marquis de Cha- "teauneuf to all intents and purposes."

"Admirably hit off!" said de Sancy laughing. "De Chateauneuf* certainly "is the most pompous solemn coxcomb "on our court-list of important frivolity. "A courtier from his cradle, and of course "a hypocrite, though a harmless one, he "is under a perpetual exertion to hide the "deficiency of his mind, and the incon- "sequence of his character, beneath the "veil of affected gravity and serious gri- "mace. You will meet with many such "ephemeral things in this great museum "of a world; these splendid insects, whom "the *naturalists* in characteristics would "class with the genus of the large blue

* For an account of this young nobleman, see *Memoires de Sully.*

" buzzing fly, the most useless and self-
" important thing in the creation."

Here the theme of de Sancy's remark, probably suspecting the nature of his conversation by the keen glance of his eye, walked away.

" You see," said Imogen, fearful that de Chateauneuf had overheard them, and equally unwilling to give pain to the mind of another as to repress the awakened gaiety of her own, " you see, my lord,
" you have chased away your buzzing in-
" sect."

" And I rejoice at it," said the marquis,
" for as the fairest fruit attract the flies,
" I was apprehensive he would have di-
" rected his flight hither. But now the
" disquisition of the naturalist is over,
" here comes subject matter for the anti-
" quarian. Pray observe that group of
" female *antiques*, which looks like the
" *Fates* cut in bronze. They were the
" three most celebrated beauties of the
" *old* court; and as they *thus* bear about

" the ruins of their past splendor, form a " kind of *memento mori* to the beauties of " the *new*."

" Or living chronicles of *other times*," said Imogen, " which bring the sad truth " to every female heart—' To this com- " plexion must she come at last.' "

" And whose sympathising infirmities," rejoined the marquis, " remind me of the " social compact of the *Gracea*, who had " but *one* eye and *one* tooth among them, " of which (with sisterly accommodation) " they made alternate use."

Imogen, in spite of her good-nature, in spite of her humanity, struck more with the droll air of mimicry with which this observation was made than at the ludicrous idea itself, burst into an involuntary fit of laughter; when turning aside her head, to conceal the impulse of risibility she could not restrain, she perceived the chevalier de Sorville standing close behind her, and apparently listening to the conversation which had passed, with a look that testified how little satisfaction he derived from its theme.

Imogen, though she expected to meet him at court, had not seen him enter; and his proximity at a moment when the desire to be brilliant preceded the wish to be amiable, and her vivacity had got the start of her benevolence, covered her with confusion. Before she had the courage or opportunity to address him, he had walked away, and joined the duchess de Sully, with whom the marquis's *group of antiques* were at that moment conversing. Notwithstanding this transient shade of chagrin, the gay de Sancy had again begun to interest her attention and call forth the scintillations of her vivacity, when the entrance of the king put a sudden stop to all general and private conversation.

His majesty walked up the room, leaning on the arm of the duke de Sully; and conversing familiarly with Sebastian Zarnet, an Italian, and one of his chief favourites. Those adulatory attentions pointed by the various groups to the respective objects of their several devotions, were now all concentrated in the king; who became the

focus of those scattered rays of interested homage, which in his absence only fell on bodies of inferior attraction; and the little train with which he had entered the audience-chamber soon accumulated to a multitude. So long had the wish of beholding this *patriot* monarch been buoyant in the heart and imagination of Imogen, that she was unable to trace back the moment when it awakened in her bosom; and the attractive brilliancy of de Sancy, the suspected displeasure of the chevalier, vanished from her thoughts as her soul-beaming eye pursued the form of the king. The graceful dignity of his air, the animated tints of his complexion, and the sweetness and expression of every lineament that formed the happiest countenance in the world, rendered his person as interesting as his character. The simplicity of his dress was a satire upon the splendid fopperies of his courtiers; many of whom, he was wont pleasantly to say, carried their old woods on their backs. His coat and pourpoint of dark-grey cloth, his cloke of

rose-coloured satin, and the snowy plumage of his hat, for which he was always so remarkable, formed a striking contrast to the profusion of gold, silver, and jewels, that glittered on every side, and set off by its singular simplicity the imperial magnificence that breathed round the person of the royal wearer. With an air dignified though affable he received the homage of the court; and, at once witty himself and the cause of it in others, he elicited and returned a perpetual flow of brilliant repartee from the wits and humourists who surrounded him; while he mingled among the ladies with a playful gallantry, that was grateful to each, though addressed to all. As soon as he observed the duchess de Guise, he approached and conversed with her for some time. As the duchess and her daughter had advanced to meet him, and were at some little distance from where Imogen stood, she could not overhear their conversation; but in a few minutes the duchess approached, took her hand, and, whispering a few words of encouragement

in her ear, led her to his majesty. Imogen, blushing, trembling, and all emotion, was prevented bending the knee by the condescension of the king, who, taking her by the hand, and gazing on her with looks of admiration, exclaimed: "Cousin "de Guise, this is the most dangerous re- "bel we have yet encountered. From "such an insidious enemy as this there is "no escape, since she conquers even in "submitting."

His majesty then endeavoured to draw Imogen into conversation, and spoke of Italy and the court of Florence, from which, he said, he understood she had lately returned. Imogen replied to his questions with a *naïf* but timid simplicity, and with that original elegance of expression which was too natural ever to be relinquished even under the influence of the strongest emotions. The king testified his approbation not only by his looks but by the most flattering expressions, and then joined the duchess de Beaufort, to whom he devoted all his attention while the levee lasted.

Every eye had been fixed on Imogen during the king's conversation with her, but the all-affectionate, all-anxious look of the chevalier was that which alone fixed *her* attention. She triumphed in his triumph, and lured him to her side with a a smile, when she was prevented from speaking to him by de Sancy and a crowd of the courtiers who pressed forward to be introduced to her. Among others, the duke de Guise was led by the hand of his beautiful sister, who whispered Imogen that her mother had commissioned her to engage her for the rest of the evening, as she expected a select party at the hotel de Guise, and added with an arch look, that *her guardian* was included in the invitation. The duchess de Guise was among the first to leave the court; and Imogen, whose spirits had attained to their highest pitch of elation, accompanied her home. The party at the hotel de Guise consisted chiefly of those to whom Imogen had been introduced, with the addition of mademoiselle d'Entragues and the marchioness

de Belleisle, so celebrated for her beauty and talents, and the tragical sequel of whose life is so generally known. Early in the evening the high constable de Montmorency and mademoiselle d'Entragues engaged Imogen at primero. It was in vain she declared she knew nothing of the game. Mademoiselle d'Entragues urged the indispensable necessity of learning; and de Sancy, who still hovered near her, offered himself as her preceptor in the fashionable science. "Not," said he, as she seated herself at the table and he hung over the back of her chair," "that "I promise you success, although I will "give you skill; for it is a proverbial tru- "ism that chance never favoured those "whom nature has highly endowed.— "What, my lord high constable, are you "going to engage with mademoiselle de "St. Dorval at primero, and, like the an- "cient Batavians, play away your liberty?"

"De Sancy," said the high constable, taking his seat at the table, "your intre-

pidity of my stimulus. Where you have staked your heart with certainty of a loss, I will venture to risk my freedom."

"Rather," said de Sancy, "take warning by my fate, and retreat while it is "yet in your power."

A *ben trovaté* floated on the lips and swam in the bright eye of Imogen, but her timid heart issued out a writ of commitment, and the crimson blush of modesty took prisoner the lively sally of her wit. Though yet a novice in the doctrines, dogmas, and formulas, of fashionable jargon, she was not unconscious of the gallant allusions uttered by its veterans; yet she blushed that they were understood, and that blush betrayed her consciousness; but she soon learnt to receive the homage of the world *without a blush,* not as a voluntary donation, but as a just tribute. Less interested in the game than flattered by the adulation of the duke de Montmorency; more attentive to the brilliant sallies of de Sancy than to his precepts; and engrossed

at intervals with the gaiety and variety of the objects that flitted round her, Imogen lost every game with as little concern as she played it, until her empty purse warned her of her bankruptcy. Imogen coloured deeply when she found herself in debt without immediate power of defraying it; but the high constable, to whom she had lost, rose and said: "It is I who am deeply "your debtor for the happiest moments I "ever enjoyed;" and de Sancy, throwing his purse on the table, entreated to be considered her banker. At that moment the chevalier de Sorville, whom Imogen had lost sight of since dinner, stept up to her, and put his purse into her hand. Imogen's warm blushes faded on her cheek; she turned round to thank him, but he had mingled in the crowd. "How supremely "happy is the chevalier de Sorville," said de Sancy, who had watched her countenance during the whole transaction: "and "yet, with all that philosophic equanimi- "ty of his, he walks away as coolly as if

" he was insensible of the enviable pre-
" ference he enjoys."

" The chevalier is my guardian," said Imogen eagerly.

" Your guardian!" repeated de Sancy; " surely the charge consigned of the " Hesperian dragon was less precious and " less dangerous."

Imogen, who had now in some degree awakened from her dream, and who, engrossed by the tender watchful anxiety of her amiable guardian, sought him every where with her eye, scarcely attended to the exhaustless adulation of the elegant de Sancy.

" I perceive," said he, " that, all per-
" fect as you are, you are still human, and
" that that object which is most desirable
" to you is not that immediately in your
" possession. Shall I recall that runaway
" guardian to you?" And without waiting for an answer he flew to execute her wishes, which, though not breathed, he had traced in the anxiety of her counte-

nance. In a few moments he returned, and, leading the chevalier towards her, with a bow retired.

Hope and expectation brightened on the countenance of de Sorville as he seated himself beside her. "Do you wish to ho-
"nour me with any commands? said he.

"Ah!" returned Imogen, "it is not
"for me to command one who anticipates
"my wishes, and kindly acts for me where
"I am incapable of acting for myself.
"But this is not the place to express my
"feelings. Here is the purse that you put
"into my hand. Pray seek the lord high
"constable, and discharge my debt; it is,
"I believe, about a hundred crowns."

"Besides what you have already paid?" said the chevalier rising.

"Besides what I have already paid," repeated Imogen blushing.

The chevalier went to seek the duke, and in a few minutes returned with the purse empty.

"I have obeyed you," said he, "but

"with some difficulty; the duke seemed "anxious to be your creditor." The chevalier then informed her her carriage was in waiting.

"I am glad of it," returned Imogen, "for I am almost weary even of pleasure."

The chevalier only answered with a sigh; and Imogen, having paid her compliments to her illustrious hostess, presented her hand to her guardian, who conducted her to her carriage in silence.

"I shall see you early to-morrow," said Imogen as he shut the door.

"If you wish it," returned de Sorville.

"*If!*" repeated Imogen with a reproachful smile, and the carriage drove off.

END OF VOL. III.

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